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ABSTRACT

A policy analysis examined existing school-to-work transition programs in order to identify and evaluate the arguments for a national initiative to provide school-to-work transition services to high school seniors who are poorly equipped to obtain and retain jobs after graduation. To gather data for the study, the researchers conducted a literature review and consulted with experts in the field of school-to-work transition programs. Based on their analysis, the researchers determined that transition service packages emphasizing classroom instruction for job readiness are much cheaper and easier to administer than are those programs emphasizing work experience during students' senior year in high school. One highly successful example of the school-based approach was Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), a program that served 6,800 high school students in eight states during 1982-1983 at a per-student cost of $900. After making a detailed analysis of the organizational structure and staffing of JAG, the researchers recommended a national initiative for improving school-to-work transition that would be permanent, would provide services to a broader segment of the population than the Job Training Partnership Act, and would maintain enough flexibility to allow for the adjustment of performance standards over time. (MN)

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FINAL REPORT

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SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAMS: A POLICY ANALYSIS

BY

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HI-3654-RR

January 1984

Prepared for

JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES, INC.
Washington, D.C.

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SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAMS: A POLICY ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PROBLEM

The United States is shifting from glut to scarcity of young workers, with a 20% decline expected by the mid-1990s. Without quantity, we must have quality in the youthful work force in order to compete in the world economy, improve living standards, and provide for a greatly increased retirement population in the next century. But this challenge is made more difficult by the fact that a rising proportion of the dwindling youth population belongs to disadvantaged racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

YOUTH POLICY PRIORITIES

To meet the new demographic challenge, youth policy must emphasize strategies to strengthen the economic, social and civic value of all young Americans. Much of this responsibility lies in the schools' traditional domain. However, the period of youth decline also calls for youth employment policy to promote and improve economical, successful methods for increasing the labor-market value of disadvantaged youth and facilitating their relationships with employers.

This study considers the desirability of a national initiative to aid disadvantaged students' transition from school to work. The study does not attempt to judge whether the strong arguments for a national initiative justify an exception to necessary constraints on federal domestic spending, nor does it evaluate possibilities for shifting funding from other federal purposes. The idea of a national initiative is instead assessed on its merits, in relation to the demographic and economic outlook and the federal priorities expressed in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

TYPES OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAMS

School-to-work transition programs are relatively short-term and low-cost interventions to strengthen the employability and post-graduate employment of the non-college bound high school student who needs this assistance. A variety of techniques and packages of such services were tested (with drop-outs as well as students) under the Carter Administration's youth employment demonstration projects. One conclusion of the present study is that enough is known from this and subsequent experience to recommend legislating a basic model (with options) rather than a smorgasbord of alternatives.

Evaluated programs have variously emphasized (or been limited to) work experience during the school year, job-search assistance, and "job readiness" instruction in the classroom. Participants' employment advantage over "comparison groups" eight months after graduation is clearest

for programs that offer a package of related services. Among such programs, those emphasizing work experience appear least suited to large-scale replication. They are useful to keep students from dropping out, but they are relatively costly, they pose serious administrative and quality-control problems, and they may occupy as much as half of a senior's school time.

Transition service packages emphasizing classroom instruction for job readiness are much cheaper and easier to administer, and they are more clearly effective if combined with job-development assistance. However, these programs often require 5-10 hours a week of scheduled class time during the senior year. This is justified if it includes significant remediation of basic academic skills. Otherwise it is a drawback for schools that are struggling to meet minimum competency standards for graduation.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY: AN EXEMPLARY MODEL

This study has looked most closely at a version of the school-based approach that did very well in DOL evaluations of employment impact, is flexible in demands on scheduled classroom time, and emphasizes extracurricular activities, strong attention to job development, an extended follow-up of graduates and their employers, a basic program professional who provides all program services to his or her group of participants, and an organizational structure that is not exclusively identified with any "side" or party to the school-to-work transition process.

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is the successor to this 1979-80 demonstration project. In 1982-83, JAG programs operated in eight states, serving 6,800 high school seniors at a per-student cost of $900. Net gain evaluations of the Class of '82 found exceptional advantage in percent-employed 5-6 months after graduation and substantial advantage (17-33%) in percent employed and/or in school for the disadvantaged student categories: persons from welfare families, nonwhites, those with poor grade averages, and those with little or no prior work experience. This program has documented the replicability of favorable results for its basic formula in varied locations and over time, at a per-participant cost only a fourth or fifth of work-study programs whose impact on post-graduate employment and other positive outcomes is extremely uneven.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A NATIONAL INITIATIVE IN IMPROVING SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

The JAG program's costs are low enough so that a national program of this kind could have aided the "bottom" 20% of the 1982-83 senior class at considerably lower total cost than federal expenditures for the youth summer job program or the Job Corps. Together with demonstrated effectiveness in aiding the disadvantaged, this financial potential for substantial coverage of the at-risk population makes the JAG model an appropriate starting point in considering legislation for a national initiative. The study considers numerous issues, modifications, and options regarding this model. The most important are the following:

Organizational Structure

Nationally and in each State, JAG is organized as a non-profit corporation with a leadership Board. In addition to strong business representation, each Board includes top people from government, labor, education, and community organizations, who play active roles in policy, planning, and public relations.

Bridging two "worlds," school-to-work transition services may benefit from a separate organization. There are many ways to define and position such an organization within the services-delivery structure established by the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA), such as the Job Corps model, or a State organization reporting to the Governor, or a local entity reporting to the Private Industry Council (PIC), or an entity reporting to the PIC's grant recipient. The Congress's decision will reflect its judgment on the relative priority of school-to-work transition services in the larger context of federal employment and training policy.

Second, the "best" structure is not a settled question. Although a basic structure should be chosen by the Congress, a small number of organizational alternatives should be authorized in receptive States or service delivery areas to permit comparative evaluation. Possible alternatives include programs operated by the State Education Department, and programs where responsibility is divided between schools and the Employment Service.

Staffing

In the JAG model, a single trained professional provides all program services (instruction, counseling, extracurricular activities, parent contacts, job development, follow-up) in a one-to-one relationship with about 35 students. This arrangement serves objectives of continuity and commitment to the student's best interests. It appears highly successful with the back-up and supervision the JAG structure provides. We strongly recommend its adoption by a national program.

Permanence

Volatility of policy and funding under CETA had harmful effects on program administration that JTPA seeks to reduce. A school-to-work transition initiative should embody an intent of stability in basic rules and financial support. Optimally, the need for such a program will diminish as education in the lower grades is strengthened. Legislation should call for a major review of need for the program in ten years.

However, the intent of permanence must also influence legislative design. Performance standards that reflect priorities must be defined, workable, and enforced. Phase-in should allow sufficient time for orderly establishment and staffing of the organization, and initiation of the program at the start of the school year. Indications of participating jurisdictions' serious commitment, such as cost-sharing from state revenues or existing JTPA appropriations, may be desirable.

Targeting

Because school-to-work transition is a preventative program, JTPA eligibility criteria of economic disadvantage are excessively narrow for identifying the population at risk. A combination of indicators is needed for individual eligibility. To strengthen targeting efficiency, it may also be desirable to exclude from eligibility (at least under standard financial arrangements) high schools with very small enrollment and those with an exceptionally large percentage of college bound students. Institutional safeguards, diagnostic tests, incentives, and net-gain evaluations are necessary to protect against the tendency of absolute performance standards to promote "creaming" the applicant pool.

Access to the transition-services package should be provided to needed students in all relevant curricular tracks (general-education, vocational, work-study). However, the schools should be permitted or required to define circumstances in which this access should be predicated on students' willingness to obtain the program's instructional services outside of normal class hours. Job readiness instruction should not compete with compensatory education or with the acquisition of vocational skills for which there is a demand. At the same time, the program's job development and follow-up services should be contingent on completion of its in-school component.

Flexibility

The basic objective of transition services is improving labor-market experience. It is only partially known how specific program components and linkages contribute to this objective, where it is achieved. The same is true for related objectives that transition programs aim to serve, including preparation for independent living and responsible citizenship, and dropout-prevention. These uncertainties are the rational basis for JTPA's present support of "exemplary programs" that are locally well-esteemed although lacking net-gain evaluation or having a format that has proved disappointing elsewhere.

A national program must steer between the rocks of excessive permissiveness and over-design. Notably, programs that wish to include a choice or sequence of after-school work-experience and club-type activities should be authorized on some basis in localities where work-experience programs are in place and popular. A variant without either of these types of extracurricular activity might also be tested. Variants that significantly raise costs per participant (e.g., by providing stipends) should not be funded for such expenditures under the program.

A second kind of flexibility relates to adjustment of performance standards over time. During economic upturns, placement becomes easier and employers with higher quality jobs become more interested in inexperienced high school graduates. There may also be a secular trend in this direction as the size of the youthful labor pool dwindles. A national program should be designed to strengthen pressures and incentives for upgrading the quality of placements when and where labor-market conditions permit.

SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAMS: A POLICY ANALYSIS

I. PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This report is based on a policy analysis of school-to-work transition programs, conducted by Hudson Institute under contract to Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc. (JAG). The study utilized literature review and consultation with experts to assess the nature and extent of the problem these programs address, and the efforts that have been made to deal with it. Impacts and costs of alternative approaches were examined to the extent that available published sources permitted. Field interviews, review of records, and observation of program operations were conducted at the JAG affiliates in Arizona, Cincinnati, Delaware, and Memphis, investigating "outside" views of the program and the needs it serves, as well as the views and activities of program personnel, participants, graduates, employers, and Board members.

The basic purposes of the study were (1) to identify and evaluate the arguments for a national initiative to provide school-to-work transition services to high school seniors who are poorly equipped to obtain and retain jobs after graduation; and (2) to make recommendations regarding the form and content of such a national initiative. Section II of the report, which draws heavily on prior Hudson Institute work, deals with the demographic, social, economic and legislative trends and outlook that bear on the desirability of this public investment at the present time. Section III provides a definition and overview of school-to-work transition programs. Section IV utilizes the analysis of Jobs for America's Graduates to provide indicators of the costs, participation rates, and cost-effectiveness that might be expected for a national program of similar format. Section V discusses a set of key issues for national program design.

The study assesses the desirability of a national initiative in relation to the youth-policy priorities suggested by the demographic and economic outlook, and in relation to evidence of cost-effectiveness for disadvantaged youth. The positive arguments are substantial. However, this analysis has not attempted to define their competitive importance in the larger context of serious federal fiscal stringencies. Likewise, the study has not addressed the proportional fiscal question within the youth-policy context: How much public investment in school-to-work transition services is appropriate in relation to other types of expenditure that aim to improve the labor-market value of disadvantaged (and "advantaged") youth?

Instead, the report establishes what we believe to be a strong case, on its merits, for a national initiative. It utilizes past and present experience to examine the strengths and weaknesses of school-to-work transition programs, for the purpose of drawing inferences about program design suited to large-scale replication and "permanent" rather than demonstration-project status.

II. ESTABLISHING THE CONTEXT

A. Demographic Change

In a Labor Day address in 1963, President John F. Kennedy emphasized the coming need to "find" jobs for the huge numbers of young people who would soon be reaching working age. Twenty years later, that period of demographic stress has come to an end. As Table 1 shows, the United States has shifted from growth to decline at the young adult ages. Peak to trough, the number of youth seeking employment may drop by more than twenty percent.

As indicated in the table, the Census Bureau's new provisional state projections show a great regional variation in the projected trends. The declines for ages 15-19 (which began before 1980 and will terminate in the mid-1990s) will have a net effect, 1980-2000, ranging from a 34 percent drop in the Northeast to a 16 percent gain in the West. For ages 20-24, the expected range extends from a 3 percent drop in the West to 39 percent in the Northeast. However, it is important not to equate projected regional trends in numbers of young adults with the regional distribution of future labor scarcity problems. The West and South could face quite serious labor-scarcity problems if they continue to be favored in employers' locational choices. The key point is the magnitude of change from past trends that all regions and most localities should expect.

A second foreseeable aspect of the demographic outlook is continuing changes in the composition of the young-adult population. Not only will total numbers fall substantially; also, those racial and ethnic groups that experienced the least decline in births in the 1960s and 1970s will continue to become proportionally more important. Nonwhites (for whom federal projections are published) were 12 percent of the 15-19 population

Table 1

PAST AND PROJECTED TREND AT LABOR-FORCE ENTRY AGES, U.S. AND REGIONS: 1960-80 AND 1980-2000

	1960-1980	1980-2000
AGES 15-19		
UNITED STATES	+59%	-11%
Northeast	+48	-34
North Central	+52	-23
South	+59	- 2
West	+91	+16
AGES 20-24		
UNITED STATES	+97%	-20%
Northeast	+76	-39
North Central	+85	-32
South	+101	-12
West	+141	- 3

SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS, 1960, 1970, 1980; CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS, SERIES P-25, NO. 937, AUGUST 1983.

in 1960, 17 percent in 1980, and will be 20 percent of the total in 2000. Although projections are not available for other population subgroups, it is clear from past trends in numbers of young children by family type that tomorrow's young workers will increasingly often come from backgrounds associated with employment and earnings disadvantage. This includes, for example, recent foreign immigrants and children from one-parent families. However, dwindling numbers create the opportunity to reverse the rising trend of youthful unemployment and crime that has plagued the United States since the 1950s.

B. Socioeconomic Change

Hindsight suggests that the U.S. economy did rather well at assimilating the baby-boom generation into the world of work. The number of teenagers holding jobs doubled between 1960 and 1980. In the late 1970s, the job-holding proportion of the total population ages 16 and older reached record levels.

However, the number of teens and young adults seeking jobs rose faster than the number obtaining them. Because the significance of employment and unemployment percentages is disputable for persons still in school, Table 2 separately distinguishes 16-24 year olds who were not in school.

For black 16-24 year olds who are not in school, the unemployment rate is nearly three times the rate for white out-of-school youth. This represents a significant relative deterioration since 1975, when these rates were 13 percent for whites, 27 percent for blacks and 20 percent for Hispanics.*

*For source of statistics, see Table 2. For additional data, see Section V-B.

Table 2

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE STATUS OF 16-24 YEAR OLD WHITES, BLACKS AND HISPANICS BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT STATUS, 1981

	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL			
% IN CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	84%	73%	75%
% HOLDING CIVILIAN JOBS	73	49	63
CIVILIAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	12	33	15
ENROLLED IN SCHOOL			
% IN CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	49%	29%	38%
% HOLDING CIVILIAN JOBS	43	19	32
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	13	34	16

SOURCE: STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES, 1982-83, p. 381.

The growth of the black disadvantage may be partially attributable to the later peaking in numbers of black youth shown in Figure 1.* Thus work opportunities for young blacks may improve as numbers decline from their early-1980s peak. Following simple economic reasoning, dwindling numbers should correlate with lower unemployment rates and higher wages. However, blacks face an additional disability owing to their heavy concentration in older cities that have lost much of their manufacturing base. By contrast, the relatively better standing of young Hispanics, shown in Table 2, is associated with strong concentrations in job-rich "Sunbelt" areas. It should not be construed to imply that the employment disadvantages of minority youth are limited to blacks.

Another important source of minority disadvantage in the labor market has been educational deficiencies.** In terms of years of schooling, the black lag has narrowed greatly since 1960 (Table 3), essentially disappearing for enrollment under age 20. However, a substantial years-of-school deficit exists for Hispanics of Mexican and Puerto Rican background.

The schools have also improved reading achievement for blacks and Hispanics, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Table 4). Nevertheless, measured achievement for minorities continues to lag white students'. Weaknesses of preparation and opportunity for

---

*Because this graph is based on the Census Bureau's 1976 projections, it does not show the increase in numbers of young blacks that is now expected near the century's end. The most recent projections (not available in annual detail) show a 19 percent increase for blacks ages 18-21 in 1995-2000, compared to an 11 percent increase for whites. In addition, increased immigration has reduced the projected declines.

**For discussion of educational problems, see Frank E. Armbruster, Our Children's Crippled Future: How American Education has Failed (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Company, 1977).

Figure 1

"BABY BUST" IMPACT AT AGES 18-21, BY RACE, 1976-1995:
PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 1976
(1976=100)

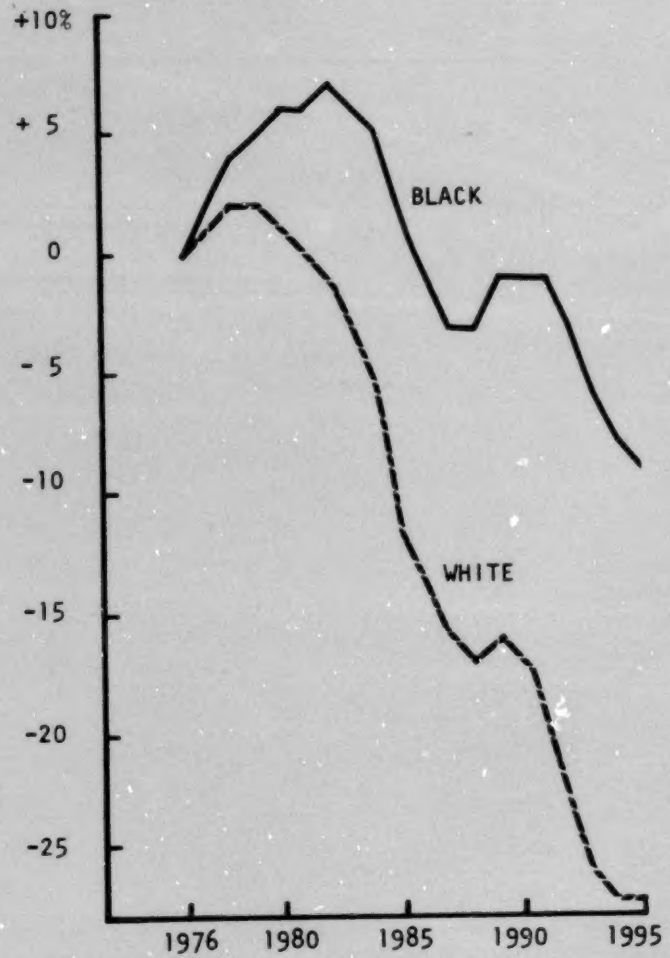


Table 3

PERCENT OF AGE GROUP ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

AGES	WHITE		BLACK	
	1960	1980	1960	1980
14-15	98%	98%	96%	98%
16-17	83	89	77	91
18-19	39	46	35	46
20-21	21	32	12	23
22-24	9	16	4	14

MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, PERSONS 25 AND OLDER

WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC
1960	1980	1960	1980	1980
10.9	12.5	9.0	12.0	10.7

PERCENT OF 25-34 YEAR OLDS WITH SPECIFIED SCHOOLING, 1981

	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	12 OR MORE YEARS
WHITE (INCLUDING HISPANICS)	.9%	87%
BLACK (INCLUDING HISPANICS)	1.4	76
HISPANICS	7.9	57

SOURCE: STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES, 1982-83, PP. 140-143.

Table 4

AVERAGE READING PERFORMANCE: GRADE OUT OF 100

	1975	1980
ALL 9-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	65%	68%
NON-HISPANIC WHITE	68	70
NON-HISPANIC BLACK	55	60
HISPANIC	55	60
ALL 13-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	60	61
NON-HISPANIC WHITE	63	63
NON-HISPANIC BLACK	47	50
HISPANIC	49	51
ALL 17-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	69	68
NON-HISPANIC WHITE	72	71
NON-HISPANIC BLACK	52	52
HISPANIC	57	59

PROPORTION OF 9-, 13-, AND 17-YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN THE LOWEST QUARTILE IN READING ACHIEVEMENT

	1971	1975	1980
ALL 9-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	25%	25%	25%
WHITE	20%	21%	22%
BLACK	56	49	45
ALL 13-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	25%	25%	25%
WHITE	19%	20%	21%
BLACK	56	56	50
ALL 17-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS	25%	25%	25%
WHITE	20%	20%	20%
BLACK	63	62	62

SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS, THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION, 1983, PP. 52, 56. TABULATIONS FROM NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

self-support are associated with serious problems of criminal behavior, drug and alcohol abuse, illegitimacy, and family break-up. Children growing up in this worsening environment have additional strikes against them. And the vast socioeconomic costs to the nation at large continue to mount.

C. The Labor Market of 1985-1995 and the Transition From-School-To-Work

1. Introduction

In the last two decades the job environment for youth facing the transition from school to work has reflected: (a) a slowdown in economic growth, (b) two particularly severe recessions, (c) extraordinary trends raising both the supply and demand for labor, (d) the recent vigorous economic recovery, (e) shifts in the composition of demand, (f) a changing composition among skill and demographic groups, (g) more intense labor market incentives, and (h) changing attitudes among youth and the rest of the labor force. There will be further rapid changes in the decade ahead, many with directions and magnitudes quite different from the past.

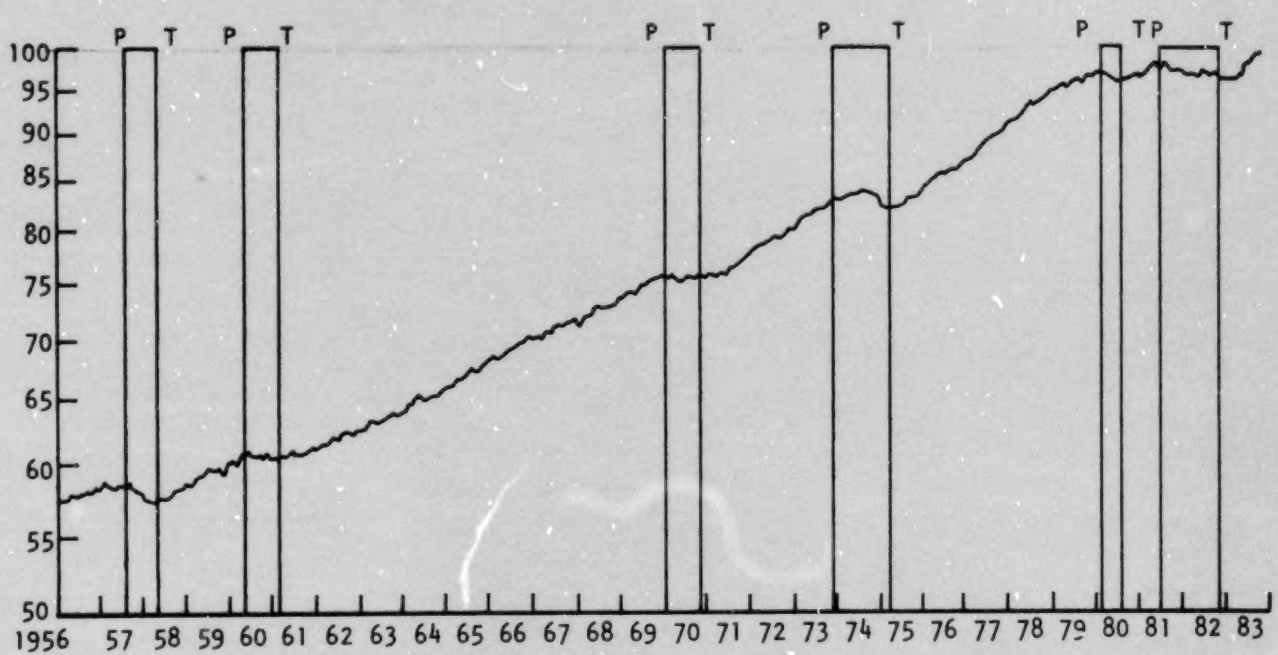
The dimensions of the labor market of the 1980s and the 1990s are expected to be unusually favorable to the success of efforts which aid the transition from school to work, but to require increased emphasis on targeting in order to achieve what a more favorable labor market will not fully accomplish by itself.

2. The Overall Labor Balance

Between 1962 and 1979 the U.S. economy created an average of 2 million jobs per year--far above its historic rate (Figure 2). In part the rise in employment reflected a rapid increase in the number of people seeking

Figure 2.

NONFARM EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, 1956-1983



P=PEAK T=TROUGH OF BUSINESS CYCLE.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, BUSINESS CONDITIONS DIGEST (NOVEMBER 1983), P. 17.

jobs. The large influx of youth born in the baby boom years came at a time of unusually rapid growth in labor force participation of women. These rapidly increasing supplies held down salaries and encouraged growth of demand. They also led to the creation of new opportunities dependent on that labor supply, as evidenced in the employment rise in fast foods, personal care functions of the health services industry, and female self-employment.

The rapid rise in employment after the early 1960s also was encouraged by changes in the cost to employers of engaging in capital-intensive production. The effects of energy price increases were especially evident. In addition, regulatory costs appear to have fallen most heavily on capital-intensive industries, and tax effects and risk effects of inflation also operated to discourage capital investment. Reactions to risks of doing business in the difficult economic environment of the 1970s and early 1980s also encouraged increased use of viable labor relative to fixed capital. These cost and risk factors together encouraged strong demand for jobs at the same time as the supply of jobs was increasing extraordinarily rapidly.

The more favorable longer term labor balance was severely upset by the 1975 and 1981-82 recessions and the major changes in the structure of the economy which the recession intensified. The specter of long-term double-digit unemployment was erased by the extraordinary pace of the first year of economic recovery. Between December 1982 and December 1983 the economy created 4.0 million jobs.

The long-term labor balance will be substantially different from either the decade of the seventies or the recent past. The pace at which youth enter into the labor force will continue to decline, especially

for whites. The labor force participation rates of women appear to have been raised by the long-term economic difficulties of their mates, in a manner resembling the tendency for women to enter the labor force during recession when "primary workers" lose jobs.* With improvements in the labor markets, female labor force participation rates can be expected to return to more normal levels of growth, and, indeed, increasingly to show signs of saturation at high levels. The result is that we cannot expect to see the same kinds of large increases in labor supply in the next decade as we have experienced in the last two decades.

The prospects for labor demand overall will be significantly affected by the role of the new wave of technological changes which is engulfing the U.S. and world economies. New technologies have eliminated jobs of a more routine nature, as in the replacement of bank tellers by teller machines, but they have also created many new jobs in design, development, production, sales, installation and repair, financing, and the application of a wide range of new products and services, and by raising the competiveness of the United States internationally.

There is no agreement among experts on whether the particular technologies being introduced today or technology in general tends on balance to create or destroy jobs. Moreover, there is at least one major theory which contends that even if more jobs are destroyed, there is likely to be net job creation in the first decade of a new wave of technological innovation.**

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*Irving Leveson, with contributions by Jane Newitt, Generational Crowding: Economic, Social and Demographic Effects of Changes in Relative Cohort Size, Hudson Institute, 1980.

**Christopher Freeman, John Clark and Loc Soete, Unemployment and Technical Innovation (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982).

A useful working assumption is that new technologies will moderately slow the overall growth in demand for labor, but in doing so at a time of slowing growth in supply they will not create new imbalances in the labor market. A reasonable expectation for unemployment is that it will continue to decline as it has in past economic recoveries and that, over the next several years, labor markets will start to become substantially tighter.

A generation of analyses of labor-market programs indicates that tight labor markets are related to program success. Programs which enhance skills, job matching, work habits, and other features are likely to have substantially greater payoff when jobs are easier to get, when there are greater prospects for continuity of employment, and when wage increases and advancement are more widespread. The U.S. economy, working itself out of the recession and adjusting to the structural changes ushered in by events ranging from international competition to higher energy prices and new technologies, will increasingly offer the kind of environment in which skills and work habits can be better utilized and rewarded. Under these conditions the marketplace itself will more readily facilitate youth employment and advancement. Programs to assist youth will be most useful if they are able to target those geographic areas, population groups, employer types, skill levels, etc., for which increasing the readiness for and exposure to those opportunities can most effectively supplement and assist the marketplace.

With these changes in labor market balance will also come much more extensive shifts in the composition of employment.

3. Composition of Employment

There has been a long-term tendency for employment in service industries to rise more rapidly than employment in the goods producing industries--by one measure the share of services in employment is above 70 percent. Moreover, the structural changes which have become particularly evident and acute during the last decade have raised concerns that there could be substantial declines in the absolute number of jobs in the goods sector of the economy. These concerns were heightened by the decline of 4 million jobs in goods-producing industries during the slide into the 1981-82 recession, and by accompanying fears that with economic recovery the goods sector jobs would not bounce back. Experience has not borne out these fears.

While the share of services in the economy has risen and employment in service-producing industries has grown rapidly, there has been no long-term tendency for jobs in goods-producing industries to decline, even amid great structural change (Figure 3).* The longer term tendency is for a stable number of jobs in goods-producing industries. This is encouraged by improvements in productivity which expand demand, by mechanization which shifts some functions from services to goods production, and by the changes taking place in the nature of employment within goods-producing industries themselves.

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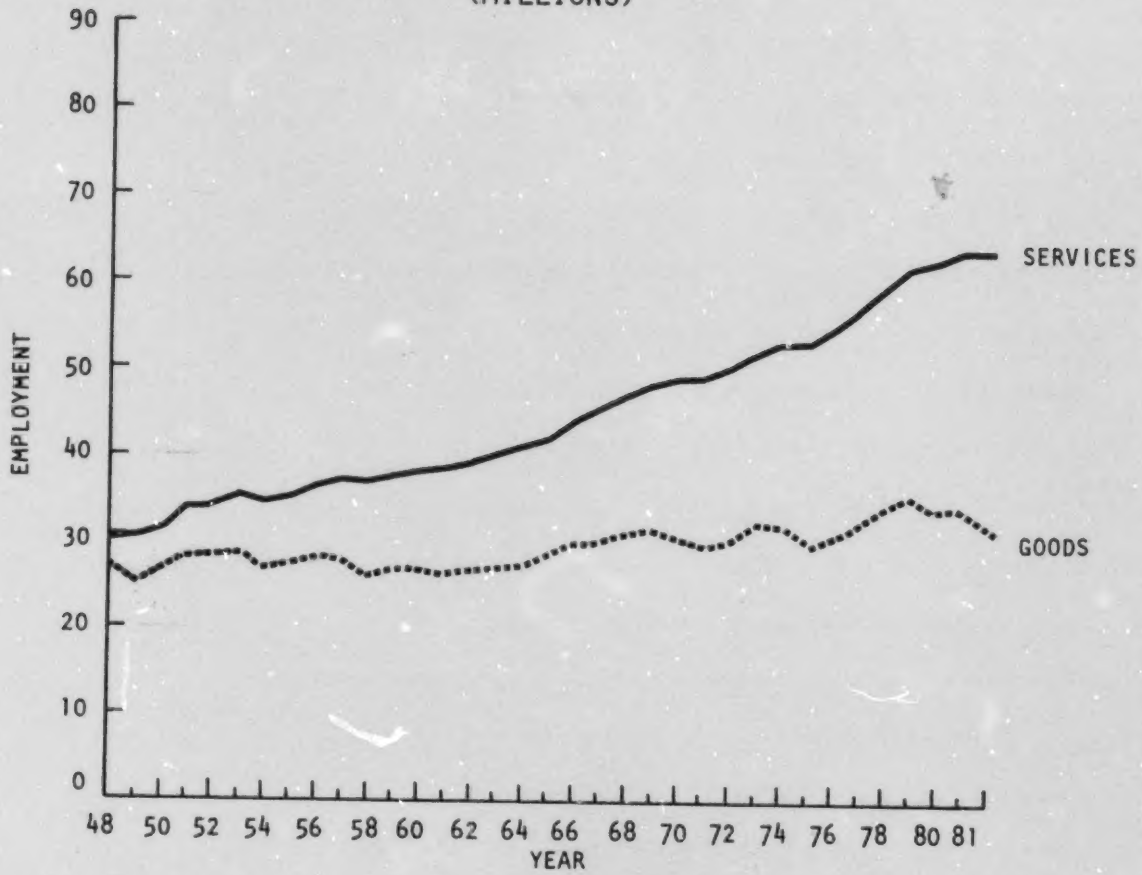
*By its nature, goods production, which includes capital spending and consumer durables, is highly cyclical. In the recent recession the fluctuation was exaggerated by the falloff in energy-related capital spending as energy prices declined, and by increased import competition in manufactures and a decline in exports associated with a dollar kept strong by high interest rates.

Figure 3

EMPLOYMENT IN GOODS AND SERVICES, 1948-1982
(MILLIONS)



SERVICES:

TRADE
FINANCE
BUSINESS & PERSONAL SERVICES
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

GOODS:

MINING
CONSTRUCTION
MANUFACTURING
TRANSPORTATION
COMMUNICATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES
GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE

NOTE: EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONS ENGAGED IN PRODUCTION, DEFINED AS EMPLOYEES IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS, PLUS PROPRIETORS. SERVICES INCLUDE TRADE, FINANCE, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

SOURCE: BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, NATIONAL INCOME AND PRODUCT ACCOUNTS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1929-1976, PP. 250-52, 255-57, 264, 267-69; IDEM, SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS, JULY 1982, PP. 83, 84, 86, 87, AND JULY 1983, PP. 73 & 74.

Goods-producing industries have seen a growth in white-collar relative to blue-collar jobs and in technical and supervisory relative to production worker employment. As production processes have become more sophisticated, companies have placed greater efforts on marketing, financing, planning, product development, and production management. Moreover, many service-type businesses, often hidden, have grown up within the goods-producing industries themselves. Notable examples of the latter are steel service centers, which manage inventory and distribution, equipment servicing of various kinds, and numerous computing, software, data base, and communications activities.

A second important change in the composition of employment is the changing mix between private and public sector job growth. In the early years of the post-World War II period, public employment (excluding armed forces) grew particularly rapidly. Between 1947 and 1963, government jobs increased by 70 percent while private jobs increased by only 9 percent. The 3.1 million rise in government employment accounted for 4 out of every 10 jobs added. These numbers were enhanced by the growth in the number of teachers and the development of social and infrastructure programs to occupy a vacuum left by the Depression and war. However, they also reflected increasing government responsibilities with rising affluence, reduced roles of the family, community and church, and increased desires for management of the economic and social environment. Some of these tendencies carried over to the decade of 1963-73. Public employment grew at nearly twice the rate of private employment. Nevertheless, the private sector created 13 million jobs while the public sector created

3.4 million. The reassessment of government roles and financial pressures substantially slowed the growth of government employment after 1973.

During 1973-82, public sector jobs grew by only 12.7 percent while private sector jobs grew by 14.1 percent. The private sector created 9.8 million jobs compared to only 1.4 million in the public sector. In the emerging climate it can be expected that the 7 to 1 ratio of private to public sector job creation of the last decade will be equaled or exceeded as efforts proceed to improve efficiency in government, market and technological opportunities, and changing attitudes encourage some shift to the private sector and allow most of the expansion to be concentrated in the market economy.

The third major source of change in the composition of employment is structural change. The sharp declines in employment associated with plant closings and production worker shrinkage in some capital-intensive sectors have had concentrated impacts on older workers. While younger workers have become disemployed and opportunities for new employment in mature industries have been curtailed, younger workers who obtained production jobs typically stayed for relatively short periods of time before moving on. Declines in mature industries may mean the loss of some relatively high wage opportunities for young workers, but they are not likely to mean an important curtailment in the availability of jobs.

The structural unemployment faced by young workers, particularly those who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, will continue to be of the same type that has plagued them for decades. While young workers generally were mobile between locations, occupations and industries, for many their work habits, skills, motivation, incentives, family role

Table 5

PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC JOB GROWTH, 1947-1982

	1947-63	1963-82	1963-73	1973-82
ABSOLUTE CHANGE (THOUSANDS)				
PRIVATE	4,618	23,118	13,338	9,780
PUBLIC	3,126	4,796	3,404	1,392
PERCENT CHANGE				
PRIVATE	9.0%	41.4%	23.9%	14.1%
PUBLIC	70.4	63.4	45.0	12.7

NOTE: PERSONS ENGAGED IN PRODUCTION. NUMBERS ARE IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS, INCLUDE PROPRIETORS, AND EXCLUDE ARMED FORCES.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, THE NATIONAL INCOME AND PRODUCT ACCOUNTS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1929-76 STATISTICAL TABLES, AND SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS, JULY 1982 AND JULY 1983.

models, and social networks necessary to influence employability and placement continue to disadvantage them relative to other population groups. Thus, many youth will remain either unemployed or out of the labor force, even after strong cyclical recovery. These youth will be prime candidates for programs that demonstrate an ability to facilitate skills, motivation, placement, and job attachment.

Over the longer term, job opportunities will be significantly influenced by the nature of the demands of a higher technology economy. There has been a tendency to suggest that a high-technology economy will demand the greatest numbers of workers in highly skilled occupations, such as engineers, laboratory technicians, and computer programmers. However, as the process proceeds and production and products become more routinized, growth is increasingly likely to occur at more modest skill levels centered around high school graduation, with and without additional training. This perspective is reaffirmed in the highly developed Boston electronics market where it is reported that electronics companies have indicated their greatest need will not be for college-trained technical people but for high school graduates.

The composition of employment will also be significantly affected by the particularly rapid growth of middle-sized and smaller firms. Large firms tend to rely particularly heavily on "internal labor markets" in which present workers are transferred and trained. A market dominated by middle-sized and smaller firms is much more fluid, with extensive labor turnover and opportunities for learning and advancement through job switching. Smaller and more rapidly growing firms have typically been more open to persons with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Often they have been aggressive in ways that exert greater pressures for worker performance.

In the smallest firms there have often been opportunities for workers who need more time to mature and learn how to operate effectively to acquire motivation and skills over a period of time and in multiple situations.

4. Competition for Jobs

Economically and educationally disadvantaged youth have faced severe competition for jobs in the high unemployment years of the last two recessions. Economic recovery is important not only because it directly creates job opportunities but because it reduces job competition from those with greater education, training, and experience, as situations arise for the more skilled who have become disemployed. Also, certain major sources of long-term competition among population groups which have worked negatively for disadvantaged youths are likely to show a somewhat improved picture in the future.

The large number of labor force entrants as the baby-boom generation reached labor force age operated to increase unemployment, depress starting salaries, and slow opportunities for advancement. These effects were particularly concentrated among the youngest age groups such as those leaving high school and among blacks, especially black males. With a slowing in the number of youth entering the labor force, this process is reversing and generational crowding is giving way to generational thinning which is rapidly improving opportunities for youth, especially disadvantaged youth. While masked by the recession, this process is quite powerful and likely to be very important during the next decade.

Opportunities for youth have also been influenced by the huge influx of women into the labor force. Many female labor force entrants have been inexperienced, many sought part-time work, many had irregular attachments

to the labor force and thus they competed very directly with disadvantaged youth for a wide range of jobs. This competition is being reduced, not only by the slowing in the growth of female labor force participation, but also because of the increasing opportunities for women to move into other activities in which they do not compete with disadvantaged youth so directly.

The situation with regard to competition from new immigrant groups is less favorable. While there have been some efforts to limit immigration, the inherent nature of the problems of policing our borders and the unwillingness of Americans to give up their own freedoms (e.g., by carrying papers) in order to seal those borders, suggest that substantial immigration will continue. Moreover, immigrant groups have tended to have high birth rates and the next generation is also providing sharp job competition. This is particularly evident in the success of Spanish-speaking groups who have often been willing to take unpleasant jobs at low pay and have a far lower unemployment rate than black youth. Economic growth is likely to be particularly favorable to new immigrants and their descendants, but they too will be able to benefit from some effects of assistance.

A further group of youth who both represent competition for some economically and educationally disadvantaged and are also part of the target population for possible programs are underachievers whose family backgrounds may not be limiting. The mechanisms which are most appropriate for working with these youth will sometimes be different from those for persons that are educationally disadvantaged for other reasons.

The combination of economic recovery, the shift from generational crowding to thinning, the slowing in the growth of female labor supply,

the opening up of opportunities for women, and the possibility of some improvement in the absorption by the economy of immigrant groups and their offspring imply a very positive environment. Demands for employment will be growing and employers will be seeking skills and willing to make investments in providing opportunities for people to learn and progress.

These conditions will be reinforced by improvements in attitudes which have been underway for a number of years. The population has been showing a heightened work ethic. There are signs of increased orientation toward the future in place of the earlier emphasis on immediate gratification. There is an increased desire for individuality and self-help. At the same time, the changes in the structure of social spending programs, the intensely competitive economic climate and shifts from emphasis on affirmative action to emphasis on equal opportunity have placed great pressures for selection of job candidates on the basis of individual worth. These changes encourage workers to undertake actions which increase the prospects that they can successfully take advantage of the new climate.

5. Conclusion

The combination of: 1) growing demands for jobs with cyclical recovery, 2) long-term economic improvement, 3) reduced competition between economically and educationally disadvantaged youth and other workers, and 4) the increasing motivation present both in the economic system and in changing individual attitudes imply that opportunities for successful school-to-work transition programs will be particularly great in the years ahead. They also imply that at a time when the market will also be doing more, careful targeting will be necessary to supplement and facilitate market forces in assisting the transition.

D. Legislative Context

A Congressional Budget Office study estimates that "federal programs that affect the youth labor market" were the subject of appropriations and tax credits totaling $5.6 billion in FY 1982.* Of this sum, 22% was dedicated to "increasing employment demand" under economic development programs and the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit: 53% was appropriated under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) to provide "training and work experience programs targeted on the economically disadvantaged"; 12% supplemented state and local spending on secondary and post-secondary vocational education; and 13% funded the U.S. Employment Service to supply information and placement assistance, thereby "improving labor market transitions."

Considering adult and youth programs together, CETA expended $56.9 billion during its nine-year existence. Of this sum, half was spent in 1978-80, when average annual outlays approached $9.3 billion, compared to $3.7 billion in the program's final year.** For most of this period, CETA programs emphasized public service employment as a counter-cyclical measure and as a means to improve employability. Overall, this activity accounted for 40% of CETA outlays, and for most of the allegations of poor management and misuse of funds that mounted together with spending during the Carter Administration. According to computations by Robert Taggart, former administrator of the Office of Youth Programs, training's

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*Congressional Budget Office, Improving Youth Employment Prospects: Issues and Options, February 1982.

**Karen Spar, Job Training Partnership Act: Background and Description, Congressional Research Service Report No. 83-76 EPW, April 19, 1983.

share of federal employment and training outlays dropped precipitously between FY 1971 and FY 1978.*

CETA was enacted in 1973 as part of a much more general effort to control the costs and reduce the federal administrative overload created by the proliferation of domestic programs in the 1960s. However, the bloc-grant mechanism's shift of decision-making and administrative authority to state and local governments generates problems in relation to ability to implement Congressional intent and administrative-oversight responsibility. Some CETA funds were mandated or reserved from the program's start. Other "strings" were progressively attached. By 1981, observers shared Taggart's opinion that "the CETA system is today unquestionably more complicated than the 'categorical nightmare' it was designed to replace."

For present purposes, the key amendments of CETA were the 1977 enactment of the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Projects ACT (YEDPA), which introduced a number of experimental approaches to attacking the problem of high unemployment rates among young people, with primary emphasis on providing work experience; and the 1978 amendments that strengthened targeting on the disadvantaged, tightened federal management, and established the basis for local program management by Private Industry Councils (PICs) under a new Private Sector Initiatives Program (PSIP). The same year saw authorization of incentives to private businesses to hire individuals from seven disadvantaged target groups, utilizing a Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, added to the Revenue Act.

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*Robert Taggart, A Fisherman's Guide, The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1981.

Disaffection from CETA has resulted in its replacement, as of the present fiscal year, by the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA), which differs in emphasizing training rather than subsidized jobs, assigns major responsibility to state governors, strictly limits outlays for non-training expenses, and mandates performance standards. JTPA retains the late-CETA emphasis on a partnership between government and industry. Its state-level job training coordinating councils must have one-third business membership. The Private Industry Councils (PICs), chosen by local elected officials from organizational nominations, must have a majority and chairman from the business community.

Two-year planning, and an operations-year funding schedule (July to June) rather than a federal fiscal-year schedule, have been introduced to ease the administrative uncertainties that plagued local implementation under CETA. The PIC is responsible for policy and planning for the service delivery area (SDA), and for selection, in agreement with local elected officials, of a grant recipient and administrative entity to operate the local program. The PIC sets (and the Governor monitors) performance goals in relation to Department of Labor standards such as placement and retention in unsubsidized jobs, increases in earnings, and reductions in welfare dependency, with additional standards for youth programs to recognize a broader range of positive outcomes--learned "competencies," completion or continuation of schooling, and military service.

Under the basic JTPA title (II-A), more than 40% of program participants must be in the 16-21 age group. In addition, "exemplary youth programs" may be conducted at the option of local planners. These include: "'education for employment,' geared for high school dropouts or youngsters

with deficiencies despite a high school diploma; 'pre-employment skills training' for eligible youth, including 14- and 15-year olds, who do not meet standard levels of academic achievement but who plan to seek full-time work after leaving school; 'entry employment experience' for youth who have completed some sort of preemployment skills training, have limited work experience and are enrolled in high school or an accredited equivalency program; and 'school-to-work transition assistance' for high school seniors and dropouts who plan to seek full-time employment."*

These federal conceptualizations are an outcome of the ambitious youth employment demonstration projects conducted, under CETA, during the Carter Administration. Also inherited from the late-CETA era is a determination to minimize "creaming": Of adults and youth served by JTPA, 90% must be economically disadvantaged, a category defined to include welfare and food-stamp recipients, persons with incomes no higher than the OMB poverty line or 70% of the BLS lower living standard, and certain handicapped persons and foster children whose households do not meet the income test.

These criteria appear excessively stringent for in-school and transitional programs that have a preventative rather than remedial orientation, vis-a-vis unemployment. Programs constrained in this manner may, at present, obtain some federal funding for job-readiness instruction and/or transition services under the Wagner-Peyser Act (U.S. Employment Service) or the Vocational Education Act. However, this recourse illustrates the type of fragmentation of the federal role that JTPA, like CETA

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*Congressional Research Service, op. cit., p. 19.

before it, aimed to correct. Under present federal fiscal conditions, it is not appropriate for the Congress to fund job-readiness instruction and transitional services for high school students who are not seriously "at risk" of extended difficulties in the labor market. But the student's parental or guardian family's income is part of a complex of factors--educational deficiencies, race or ethnicity, type of family, attitudinal and behavioral characteristics, local economic conditions--that define the high-risk population. Some students with low family incomes only need types of guidance that schools can reasonably be expected to supply from their own resources. Many students whose families exceed JTPA eligibility ceilings have less tractable problems.

JTPA is described as a "permanent" system, based on lessons-learned from CETA and its predecessors. It has inherited a major commitment to improve the employment outlook for high school students. Defining "commitment" as participant share, in FY 1981 high school students constituted 38% of a total 2.0 million CETA enrollment (excluding the Job Corps); they were 75% of the 1.2 million persons served under Title IV youth programs, and 17% of participants in the Title II-BC training programs.* However, the summer youth employment programs continue to dominate CETA/JTPA outlays for high school youth, with a Congressional appropriation of $825 million in the transition year FY 1983, compared to $192 million under Title IV-A (youth employment and training), which also covers out-of-school youth.

The youth summer employment program, dating from the beginning of the "poverty war," has maintained public support primarily as a means to

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*Congressional Research Service, op. cit., Appendix C.

keep disadvantaged young people out of trouble when school is not in session. It lacks serious standing as an investment in improving the labor-market value of the young people who participate in it. For this reason, it is something of an anomaly--fiscally, the tail wagging the dog--in relation to CETA/JTPA spending for high-school students. Efforts to strengthen the summer-job program's learning component have been made, and a recent publication by the National Council on Employment Policy treats the program as having significant potential in connection with the Council's proposed reorientation of youth employment policy to emphasize remediation of employability-related deficiencies in the "Three Rs."*

The extent to which JTPA funding should be used to supplement the schools' spending for remedial basic skills instruction lies beyond the scope of this report, although there can be no doubt that this kind of remediation--and equally reduction of the need for it--must from a larger perspective be central to policies for improving school-to-work transition. For present purposes, the key point is that the Council's recommendation would more closely align the summer-job program with the goals of JTPA-funded programs in the high schools. The latter seek to strengthen employability by means of instructional and other activities that benefit the student directly and/or induce more students to gain the advantage associated with receipt of a high-school diploma. Such in-school initiatives are preventative in a different sense from the programs that have overwhelmingly dominated federal employment/training spending since the early 1960s.

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*National Council on Employment Policy, Back to Basics Under JTPA, October 1983.

They aim to "solve problems before they start": i.e., to cut the proportion of young people who experience involuntary unemployment and the demoralizing and dangerous effects of extended unemployment, and to cut the proportion who will find themselves stuck in low-paying and insecure jobs.

From the society's point of view, effective programs of this kind should reduce the need for costly later interventions such as the Job Corps. Especially if accompanied by placement and follow-up services, they can help to maintain and strengthen levels of employment in depressed urban and rural areas. In the new demographic era, they can be equally serviceable in booming areas where the demand for young workers is increasingly likely to outstrip the supply. Nationally, as youth dwindle in numbers, improving the employability of those who terminate schooling at the secondary level is the most desirable means to dissuade employers from exporting jobs to countries with differing demographic trends. And, beyond these short-term social needs lies the stark fact that today's young children will be the 40-year olds, the backbone of the work force, when the nation enters the stressful period of the "baby boom" generation's retirement years in the second decade of the next century.

From the viewpoint of individual youngsters, including the disadvantaged, the demographic outlook connotes better entry-level employment conditions than young people have experienced while the baby-boom generation was coming of age. From the viewpoint of society and government, a tighter labor market for youth has generally favorable connotations for the economy, but the combination of dwindling numbers and compositional

change also suggests serious difficulties of labor supply if past patterns of job-readiness disadvantage are permitted to persist.

JTPA's emphasis on youth and on training implies a basically correct understanding of the needs this "permanent" program will face. But policies aiming to "stop youth labor market problems before they start" need additional thought. As suggested, these preventative programs call for looser eligibility criteria than JTPA employs. This is fiscally feasible--without foregoing opportunity for significant impact--because costs per participant are relatively low, as detailed later. However, the principal argument for such economical programs--that they reduce the need for costlier interventions later on--requires continuing measurement of effectiveness in relation to control or comparison groups. Fortunately, the youth demonstration projects of the Carter Administration provide some basis for this kind of inference, and the continuing program that was studied more closely for the present analysis has augmented this knowledge base.

III. OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAMS

A. Defining the Concept

As construed in this study, school-to-work transition programs play integrating roles, building on (and, as feasible, remediating) those aspects of the student's education that are most directly relevant to gaining and retaining employment. This is combined with intermediation of the applicant-employer relationship, and with practical counseling services during the initial months of employment.

Programs of this nature are salient to all levels and forms of youthful talent and academic background. However, the need for organized intervention is most commanding for disadvantaged students with limited education and few marketable skills. For the foreseeable future, these students will be a rising proportion of the dwindling teen and young adult population.

B. History and General Assessment

The provision of employment counseling services to high school students is generations old. Linkage of these services to practical assistance in obtaining jobs is a half-century old in terms of federal-government involvement. This initial involvement took the form of cooperation between local offices of the U.S. Employment Service and certain school districts. The scale of these relationships was greatly increased during the 1950s, which was--perhaps coincidentally--the only non-war period prior to the 1980s when the United States had a scarcity of young workers.

This cooperative effort peaked in the early 1960s, having achieved significant scale. According to a USES report, 589,621 high school seniors were registered with the local Employment Service office in 1965-66. Of

these, 303,864 also received counseling. In addition, 82,553 high school drop-outs were registered under "formal arrangements" between the schools and the Employment Service, with a placement rate of almost 40 percent. Although the placement rate for graduating seniors was apparently much lower, the report notes that many decided to continue their schooling, and others, "through assistance given them in choosing an occupation and in how to look for a job, were helped to find jobs on their own." Descriptions of a sample of these early cooperative programs indicate that some included follow-up activities.*

It is important to appreciate that this prototype took form in an era when very few students went on to college. As this changed in the 1960s, public policy and concern focused on disadvantaged youth for whom traditional approaches were evidently inadequate. The new initiatives were unavoidably experimental, but they may also have suffered from the complex ideological currents of the time. Intellectual fashion disdained the objective of assimilating the disadvantaged to a "sick society," and opposed indoctrination in allegedly outmoded "work values." Remediation programs targeting young people whose background ill-prepared them to win access to the average American's material comforts operated in a context that sometimes discredited realistic efforts toward this end. What was valuable in the emphases of the 60s was sometimes inflated beyond its value or pursued at the sacrifice of other important values. As a result, many young people--middle-class as well as poor--came of age expecting a very different world from the one they encountered.

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*Branch of Youth Services, United States Employment Service, Examples of Employment Service-School Cooperative Programs, Washington, D.C., 1968.

Lessons that were learned under the adverse conditions of the 1970s were reflected in the realm of youth policy. One lesson was renewed concern for economic growth, and recognition that it cannot be sustained by the quasi-magical processes of technological innovation alone. The outcome has been mounting pressure on the schools to alter their priorities.

A second lesson was that most jobs are in the private sector. Most disadvantaged youth, like others, must take their chances in this sector, where decisions on hiring and promotion are disciplined by market forces. As this recognition spread, new avenues for involving the private sector in youth employment programs were created, thus far with varying success. A related development was greater controversiality for the practice of offering stipends for program participation. Young people, it was said, should be encouraged in a mind-set of investing in themselves and appreciating the opportunity to do so. Income-support needs were properly a separate question.

A third lesson of the 70s was that we cannot afford to do everything; this was a major theme of President Carter's Inaugural Address. A fourth, related lesson was that "throwing money at problems" cannot substitute for knowing how to solve them, and can make matters worse.

Fifth, experience was breeding the lesson that 1960s stereotypes of the disadvantaged were overblown. There is indeed a subgroup of the needy with serious problems of drug abuse, criminal behavior, emotional disturbance, severe learning disabilities, and the like, which are costly to correct or manage. However, the inter-generational cycle of poverty and low productivity also afflicts much larger numbers whose deficiencies

of acculturation and education have been demonstrated to be tractable by lesser interventions. Thus it has become possible to think of replacing the scattershot, experimental mode of youth employment policy with a more stable mode, based on what is known about cost-effective approaches.

This study deals with one essential component of this future structure. School-to-work transition programs may operate below the high school senior level, but their focal point is management of the transition for those who near graduation in need of this assistance. This is not a clear-cut target group. It is evidently much smaller than the 49 percent of 1982 civilian high school graduates who were not enrolled in college the following October. A rough estimate is that 20 percent of seniors are not college-bound, lack applicable vocational training or strong vocational inclinations, are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and show multiple symptoms of unpreparedness for entering the world of work. This estimate can be accepted for preliminary purposes,* with the caution that demographic analysis suggests the actual percentage will rise. In addition, some proportion of high school dropouts--a group with a 42 percent unemployment rate in October 1982--might be induced to remain in school if strong transitional programs were available to graduates.

The Carter Administration's youth employment demonstration projects provide a base of evaluated in-school programs, essentially preventative in nature, that can be used to draw preliminary policy inferences. Using 1982 inflation adjustments, the CBO study cited earlier indicated per-participant costs ranging from $200 to nearly $5,000 for such programs in FY 1980.

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*For detailed discussion, see Section IV-C-2.

At the bottom of the range was very brief assistance in job search. Not surprisingly, the immediate beneficiaries of this assistance experienced no enduring gains relative to similar nonparticipants. However, this need not mean that the effort was valueless or that a program of clearer value could not be built on this modest base.

At the upper end for costs were the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects, which placed most emphasis on combining a part-time job program with in-school compensatory education to increase school retention and deter dropping out. Here the cost "per full-year slot" was $4,900, which the CBO contrasted to $14,100 for the Job Corps. The CBO observed that, although costlier interventions would "probably continue to be necessary for more seriously disadvantaged out-of-school youths," programs of this nature might have a "substantial" effect on employability "if combined with effective education."

There has been a great variety of programs that aim to keep young people in school and to equip them for labor-force entry primarily by means of work experience. Many such programs entail nothing more than a local youth employment service that facilitates information flow between commercial and household employers in the local community and young people seeking after-school jobs. Other programs dedicate a significant proportion of school hours to work experience. Such work-study programs have generally measured up poorly in evaluations of post-graduate effect on employment and earnings. This finding may be influenced by the difficulties of the administrative challenge, unevenly met by different programs at the same time and by particular programs over time. Work experiences, as has also been attested for the summer youth jobs program, can be counter-

productive, instilling or reinforcing poor attitudes and work habits. This is difficult to guard against, in a large-scale and permanent program.

The more ambitious work-experience programs have also been criticized for occupying school time that might more effectively be used to remedy academic deficiencies that have a clear bearing on labor-market outlook. The schools' move toward minimum competency requirements for graduation heightens this conflict. But the criticism is subject to qualifications. First, there is strong intuitive appeal to the inference that young blacks' scarcity of experience with employers' expectations during their school years has something to do with their post-graduate difficulties, and it may be that this handicap is not limited to blacks.* Second, rationally or not, the acquisition of a high-school diploma has an effect on employers' hiring decisions. If work-experience programs reduce dropouts, as seems probable, they have some and perhaps significant social value on that account, apart from other effectiveness measures.

The possibility cannot be discounted, and is accepted by this study, that the best of all possible school-to-work transition programs, in terms of cost-effectiveness, would have a work experience component or option. However, work-experience efforts, fiscally dominated by the summer jobs program, have continued to play a role in CETA/JTPA's funding for in-school youth that is disproportionate to their value as a means to strengthen employability.

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*Work experience before high school graduation has been shown to have favorable effects on post-graduation employment for both blacks and whites. (See Robert H. Meyer and David A. Wise, "The Transition from School to Work: The Experiences of Blacks and Whites," National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. Working Paper No. 1007, Cambridge, MA, October 1982.) But work experience <u>programs</u> have not been shown to contribute to this effect.

Among programs that aim to "enhance job qualification," the CBO study also lists compensatory education in high schools, with a far more modest cost "per full-year slot" of $650 (in 1982 dollars). Anticipating the emphasis of the recent National Council on Employment Policy report, the CBO indicated "substantial gain probable" for this type of intervention, noting that only 5 percent of federal funds for compensatory education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act go to high schools. The CBO report did not consider the possibility of CETA/JTPA funding for compensatory education. Instead, it observed that federal appropriations for vocational education--which "especially at the secondary level," it said, "have not been markedly effective at increasing the long-term employability of youths"--might instead have provided "remedial education in basic academic skills" to an additional million high school students in 1981-82.

Vocational training is of course the oldest form of federal support for high school programs to improve the labor market value of youth. At the outset, under the Smith-Hughes act of 1917, the federal financial share of national voc-ed costs was 37 percent. Like the U.S. Employment Service's "cooperative education" activities, federal vocational-education support long antedates the modern policy emphasis on the economically disadvantaged. About 30 percent of federal voc-ed spending benefits disadvantaged or handicapped persons, but "disadvantage" is defined as inability to succeed in the standard vocational curriculum. With state and local sources now accounting for more than nine-tenths of voc-ed funding, federal latitude to influence priorities and policies is weak.

Although the identifiable payoff for high-school vocational training has been very patchy, its limited success in providing skills that local employers need becomes more valuable, not less, under the new demographic trends. Considering that total federal outlays under the Vocational Education Act are smaller than funding for the summer jobs programs under CETA/JTPA, elimination of remaining federal fiscal leverage would appear "pennywise and pound-foolish" even if politically practicable.

Beyond any reasonable doubt, the existence of voc-ed curricula in the high schools has been important in dropout prevention, albeit at very high cost to state and local governments. Obviously, there is something bizarre about instances where a state may graduate as many cosmetology students in a single year as its entire employment in this occupation. Such examples point to fundamental problems of voc-ed strategy that have proved resistant to solution: I.e., vocational training in the school entails heavy investment in equipment that may quickly become outmoded (as may teachers' expertise) or lose its salience to local job opportunities. However, statistics which show that voc-ed curriculum students have no post-graduate advantage, on average, over general-curriculum students may be misleading, since a large majority of beneficiaries of voc-ed outlays are general-education students who have taken one or more vocational courses (including home economics, but also typing, shop, etc.) along the way. Unfortunately, the evaluations of school-to-work transition programs have not directly investigated the role of this background factor in placement success.

The alternative of on-the-job training (OJT) is intuitively more attractive than vocational-training programs isolated in the schools.

But its problems in the area of planning, costs, and administration are similar to--and more formidable than--those of work-experience programs, although evaluators have also been more impressed by its results. There is, in fact, no clear-cut distinction between OJT and work-experience approaches to strengthening the employability of disadvantaged young people. However, job slots with a strong OJT component are much harder to come by, and the problem of "windfall" compensation to participating employers is more serious in cost terms.

The key point to appreciate is that the fiscal problems of public investment in the vocational-skills component of school-to-work transition policy are overwhelmingly state-local government problems. The federal contribution to voc-ed programs is so small--proportionally, only a fourth of its original (1917) level, and less than half its share in 1962--that it ought to be targeted on specific, promising programs rather than (largely) swallowed up in the general voc-ed kitty. But this is not the same as diverting federal voc-ed funds to compensatory education in the high schools. With good reason--in terms of need and methodological capabilities--the public lobby for better instruction and remediation of basic skills has grown formidably in size and influence in recent years. But the great validity of this lobby's demands should not be permitted to obscure the present need of many high-school graduates (or dropouts) for other skills that enhance employability.

These latter may be simply divided between skills (and knowledge) that ease the adaptability of the young person to the specifics of the job setting--the machinery and processes of office, factory, repair shop, service agency--and those that improve his or her negotiation of the

processes of job search, job retention, and career advancement. Acquisitions of this second kind include quite specific forms of knowledge, such as how to fill out applications or dress for an interview, but they also include generalities of acculturation and motivation that are part of the growing-up process for some young people much more than for others. Ancillary skills for independent living, such as household economics, also have relevance to employment outlook and should be imparted at some time in the school years. However, even if this is done earlier, many students who are not college bound will benefit from senior-year review and reinforcement as the concept of readiness for transition acquires more reality and urgency for them.

Varied kinds of instruction and counseling have for several generations shown the high schools' sensitivity to the obvious existence of these needs. However, the traditional responses have reflected the weaknesses of the school-world's separateness. Counselors and teachers have lacked feedback to judge and adjust their efforts. The national longitudinal surveys of high-school graduates find perceived usefulness of high-school counseling to be low, and to be identified much more closely with urgings to go to college than with the transition to work.*

Interested parties outside the schools also have introduced a great variety of organized efforts to prepare high school students for the world of work. These range from Junior Achievement and other programs to encourage entrepreneurial spirit and skills to "Adopt-a-School" corporate programs featuring assembly presentations, visits to work sites,

*Nancy B. Dearman and Valena White Plisko, The Condition of Education, 1981 edition, National Center for Education Statistics, USGPO.

and the like. Community organizations have also been active in this connection. The Urban League is an important example. Other groups have addressed the transitional problems of female students. And preparation for post-school life has long been the concern of vocational student associations that have several million members.

Some non-educational organizations have always had mutually satisfactory relationships with the schools in these connections. However, there have also been serious difficulties. The schools have naturally been hostile to outsiders who proclaimed their "failure" and sought to salvage the victims of a bungled education. In the context of declining enrollment and its threat to state aid and teaching jobs, school systems and unions have, in addition, been more sensitive than they might otherwise have been to transition programs that utilized outside personnel and/or absorbed federal or state monies that voc-ed, counseling or other interests within the schools felt (rightly or wrongly) that they should or might have otherwise obtained. In addition, philosophical differences between the schools' traditional general-welfare mission and the federal government's modern focus on specific disadvantaged groups have contributed to frictions.

The Carter Administration's youth employment demonstration projects provided some horror stories illustrative of these frictions, but they also yielded a clearer understanding of the problems that are involved, and useful experience with techniques for resolving these problems. The need to address problems of "turf"--which exist within educational systems as well as in relation to outside agencies--has become more important with

recognition that the separate components of school-to-work transition assistance are aided by combination and rational orchestration. This is especially important for the appropriate target group for federal policy: students with multiple deficits that suggest significant risk of extended difficulties in the labor market.

Patchwork service provision, inequities of access (not all attributable to CETA/JTPA rules), and deficient coordination are partially attributable to "turf" problems and to differing organizational philosophies, histories, and perspectives, but these obstacles to a rationally integrated program design interact with fiscal constraints. The Job Corps is the outstanding example of the cost-effectiveness that can result when a separately organized entity is able to create an integrated program, modify it on the basis of evaluation-disciplined experience, and expend very substantial sums on a per capita basis--<u>because</u> such expenditure is deemed appropriate for the target group.

Lacking the targeting efficiency of the Job Corps, preventative programs for high school students should (and do) carry much lower per capita costs than the Job Corps. But the cost-effectiveness equation has another aspect, which is coverage. The Job Corps is constrained in coverage of its target group by aggregate costs. Likewise, the coverage that might be attained by a system of preventative services to facilitate school-to-work transition for the disadvantaged is influenced by the aggregate level of per capita costs.

For the evaluated Carter-era prototypes that provide a basis for inference, this clearly is not a trade-off of coverage for relative cost-effectiveness. Programs that center on (or are limited to) provision

of part-time jobs for disadvantaged students unavoidably rank high on the per capita cost range, owing to the necessity for stipends or wage subsidies to secure placements. As observed earlier, quality control of work experiences is difficult. If students are also experiencing job-readiness education and gaining access to transition services, the hassle and costs of job provision during the school year may be justified for keeping some youth in school who would otherwise drop out.

However, the costs and hassle recommend a filtering mechanism, in the absence of evidence that disadvantaged students gain enduring benefit from this use of their time. That is, a transition-services "package" with a fixed work-experience component is almost certainly overkill in terms of a dropout-prevention objective; it elevates package costs to an extent that limits feasible coverage and/or scants other components; and its difficulties may demand more administrative time than its contribution is worth. To cite Taggart's cautious conclusion:*

> work experience can be useful for young people in advancing work-force entry. It can be combined with training activities in a sequence, with benefits roughly proportional to the degree of training....In most other circumstances, the subsidized work will only have post-program impacts if it serves as a tryout or on-the-job training mechanism for existing unsubsidized jobs in the public or non-profit sector.

In the same section of this assessment Taggart cautions that school-based programs aiming to improve "employability skills" through instruction and activities provide measurable learning and attitude change, but they "do not markedly alter post-program labor market success except when combined with substantial job development activities so that employers

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*Robert Taggart, op. cit., p. 288.

recognize that the changes have occurred, and unless the activities are targeted to youth who plan to immediately enter the full-time labor market after graduation..."*

The CBO study found that programs combining these services cost about $1,100 per participant (1982 dollars) in FY 1980. Unlike the beneficiaries of brief job-search counseling and placement assistance, their participants retained a significant employment advantage over comparison groups eight months after graduation. A program, nearly as costly, that provided only a week of instruction and three weeks of supervised job search showed no net gain in employment after 45 weeks. This program's costs were inflated by provision of a stipend, but the CBO study notes that "the stipend proved to be necessary to induce continued job search activity by program participants." The longer term programs achieved their results without a stipend.

Of the two longer term transition programs specifically cited by the CBO, the one operated by the Employment Service showed a nine percentage-point advantage over the comparison group in employment eight months after completion, while Jobs for Delaware Graduates (JDG) had a twenty-point advantage. However, the Employment Service program, which included 5-10 hours weekly of instruction for a full school year, is a version that yielded higher net gains in testing of cognitive and attitudinal change for the classroom component than were found for the JDG program. The latter placed relatively less emphasis on formal instruction and more on job development (also providing nine months of follow-up contacts with graduates and their employers.)**

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*Ibid., p. 287.

**Taggart, op. cit., p.121.

It is a common-sense inference from these findings that programs with similar general objectives and per-capita costs will have somewhat different strengths based on priorities reflected in the program's resource allocation. However, this observation is subject to several caveats. First, nearly all net-gain evaluations of in-school youth programs are based on comparison groups--i.e., nonparticipants with measured similarities to the participants. Thus they are subject to more uncertainties than evaluations using control groups, a procedure in which applicants for a program are randomly assigned to the participant and nonparticipant categories. Second, variation of results between programs may be significantly influenced by characteristics of program design and implementation that are not separately evaluated. As a result, there is an important gap between knowlege, inspiring some confidence, that a program "works" and adequate understanding of <u>why</u> it works.

Third, what passes for "long-range" outcome monitoring is as long as two years for some older CETA adult/youth training programs but less than half as long for the in-school demonstration projects reviewed here. The great variety of trends in net advantage over this rather brief period--strengthening, weakening, disappearance, reversal--raises questions that cannot be answered about true long-term program impact on youth who, when last observed, are typically not yet out of their teens.

The ambiguities of what is known have led the General Accounting Office (GAO) to recommend further research on alternative systems for improving the employability of disadvantaged teenagers. However, the Department of Labor disagreed with this recommendation, pointing to the voluminous research undertaken under the Youth Employment and Demonstration

Projects Act of 1977. The Department contended that, from its perspective, "the task at hand is no longer knowledge development; rather, the issue is transmission and utilization of what research and demonstration have already documented."*

Research instruments that would resolve some of the ambiguities about what "works" are certainly desirable. But they are generally very costly, and they pose such challenges of technical design and implementation that their findings would doubtless be vulnerable to serious challenge on procedural grounds, rather than "settling" the issues the research investment addressed. Since any hope of noncontroversial findings about "alternative systems" hinges on a renewed scale of demonstration-project operations comparable to the Carter Administration's and far beyond the Congress's willingness to fund in the near future, the predication of policy decisions on further research is not a useful alternative to debate based on what is now known.

The following section of this report focuses on the eight-state program for which Jobs for Delaware Graduates served as prototype. Continuing net-gain evaluations have demonstrated this program's ability to replicate favorable outcomes in varied settings, and especially for disadvantaged youth. Overall, costs per participating student were $900 in 1982-83, suggesting the fiscal potential to reach a high proportion of the target group for such services.

As was just noted, the contribution to transition-program effectiveness of a program's separate components and their organization must be

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*General Accounting Office, "Labor Market Problems of Teenagers Result Largely from Doing Poorly in School," March 29, 1982, pp. 102-103.

assessed intuitively, since this type of research has rarely been done and is probably impossible in some respects. Without such validation, it would neither be responsible in a scholarly sense nor realistic in a political sense to recommend a detailed model for national replication. Yet there is the opposing hazard of excessive bias toward program components that appear simplest to reproduce on a large scale, shortchanging the importance of others that possibly should be pressed.

Should the Congress support a national initiative to promote school-to-work transition programs, the legislative details that are worked out through the political process will reflect many kinds of input. However, the experience reviewed in this section of the report supports the objective of defining a basic model (with options) rather than a smorgasbord of alternatives. The necessary hedging in this report should not be permitted to obscure this point.

IV. JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES

A. Introduction

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) provided the study team with an opportunity to observe the workings of a school-to-work transition program in varied sites. JAG has attractive, substantive programmatic characteristics. However, these characteristics are not unique to this particular program, and most of their interrelationships are not unique. Thus the appeal of the JAG program as a study subject for policy analysis does not lie in innovative content except at the systemic level. By the time of the program's initiation in 1979, the experience of others supported substantial borrowing of components and linkages, as well as establishing caveats about how (and how not) to proceed. JAG represents a second stage of experimentation, emphasizing system design as well as the retesting and modification of known techniques. This character enhances its appropriateness for close study, as do several other attributes that also have no necessary connection to superiority over alternative configurations of school-to-work transition services.

The most obvious of these attributes are the program's scale and diversity of locales, and its strong emphasis on detailed record-keeping and statistical evaluation. In the 1982-83 school year, JAG's roster of senior-class participants reached 6,800 in eight state programs with 139 participating schools. The original Delaware program covers all but one of the state's public high schools; the Tennessee program includes all Memphis public high schools (plus those in Shelby County). These are examples where school access to school-to-work transition services virtually saturates sizable labor-market areas on the basis of this

one program alone. Although the Delaware program has a significantly lower senior-class participation rate than the Tennessee program (12-13 percent vs. 17 percent), this is explicable in terms of competing programs and differing socioeconomic composition. In both locations, student access to transition services is high. Thus the program's uniform reporting procedures provide a basis for comparing measured performance in areas where "saturated access" to transition services may be approximated and in those where this indication is lacking. It is heartening that placement success rates seem insensitive to this difference. Despite the adverse economic conditions of recent years, the ability of the aided to find jobs was comparably strong in both types of environment.

In other respects as well, the JAG program's diversity of sites and its emphasis on documentation supply tentative as opposed to purely conjectural answers to questions that are important for policy planning. This resource could be mined much more thoroughly than was feasible for the present study. Of great potential value is information on variability of need, process, and "results" among types of high schools: e.g., inner-city, suburban, and rural. In addition, the existence of a large-scale "in place" recording system facilitates acquisition of information to answer further questions.

B. General Program Characteristics

The JAG program originated in Delaware in 1979, a decade after the "70001" program was launched in the same state. The format for the two programs is somewhat similar, but JAG has focused on direct school-to-work transition, while 70001 has concerned itself primarily with dropouts.

Both programs have emphasized larger social aims as well as improving immediate employability.

The national JAG program is organized at the state (or sub-state) level as a nonprofit corporation. Strong emphasis has been placed on securing a prestigious and active Board of Directors, usually including the State governor. Guidelines for Board representation are:

Business	45-60%
Government	6-18%
Labor	6-18%
Community	6-18%
Education	6-12%

The Central Office for the state corporations is small, including a chief executive officer, a director of operations and a director of administration. The basic program personnel, called "Job Specialists," are employees of the corporation who operate in the schools and are subject to the schools' rules. Regional supervisors are employed in a ratio of one to 10-12 Job Specialists. Job Specialists are employed in a ratio of one to 30-45 student participants. An advisory committee is established in each school.

The JAG program's most strongly emphasized objective is to place its graduates in unsubsidized private-sector jobs. This priority is reflected in the Board's composition, in the strong emphasis on job development among the Job Specialists' activities, in the use of a "Job Bank" to facilitate information flow about opportunitites, and in the program's internal performance measurement.

Second, the program's unusually extended schedule of post-graduate contacts with students and their employers expresses a significant priority for assisting participants to obtain improvements in wages and positions, and to solve job-related adjustment problems. In the JAG system, the key performance measure is not summer placement but status as of September 30 following graduation. As shown in Table 6, records are also summarized for status the following March 31, and Job Specialists maintain a log--reviewed by their supervisors--of all contacts during the follow-up period.

Third, the in-school component of the program combines formal instruction in 33 "competencies" with individual counseling and the activities of a participants' organization called the Career Association. Although substantial scheduled classroom time is provided at some sites, the program operates as well under conditions where there is little scheduled time. In a few cases, all instruction and counseling has been provided during study hall and breaks or before or after school. These sessions are supplemented by Career Association activities that are usually not held during school hours. Modeled on the vocational student associations, the Career Association sponsors contests for job-readiness skills, civic and social activities, fund-raising to support itself, and regional and state conferences. Participating students obtain leadership opportunities and organizational experience that most (according to Job Specialists) have not had before.

Possibly because the program did well at placement and follow-up from the start, it has operated conservatively with respect to regularizing the provision and testing of the instructional component. Some "competencies"--i.e., basic academic skills--are clearly beyond such

Table 6

JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES, CLASS OF 1982

	STATUS AS OF: 9/30/82	3/31/83
INITIAL CLASS ENROLLMENT 12/1/81*	4,037	4,037
AVAILABLE FOR PLACEMENT	3,257	3,159
--% OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT**	81%	78%
PLACEMENTS AS % OF GRADUATES AVAILABLE FOR PLACEMENT		
CIVILIAN & MILITARY EMPLOYMENT	67%	60%
SCHOOL/TRAINING PROGRAMS BUT NOT EMPLOYED	21	26
TOTAL POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	88	85
PLACEMENTS AS % OF INITIAL CLASS ENROLLMENT		
CIVILIAN & MILITARY EMPLOYMENT	54%	47%
SCHOOL/TRAINING PROGRAMS BUT NOT EMPLOYED	17	20
TOTAL POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	71	67

*EXCLUDES PARTICIPANTS IN OHIO, MICHIGAN, AND VIRGINIA PROGRAMS THAT WERE PHASED IN DURING THE 1981-82 SCHOOL YEAR.

**EXCLUDES PERSONS WHO FAILED TO GRADUATE, HAVE LEFT THE AREA, OR ARE OUT OF THE LABOR FORCE FOR SUCH REASONS AS PREGNANCY, HOME RESPONSIBILITIES, OR BEING IN JAIL.

NOTE: ALTHOUGH THERE IS VERY LITTLE ATTRITION IN NUMBERS AVAILABLE FOR PLACEMENT BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND MARCH, THIS NETS THE EFFECT OF DEPARTURES AND RETURNS TO THE AREA, AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL CHANGES IN AVAILABILITY STATUS.

a program's ability to provide without additional resources. However, the program's local officials believe that satisfactory post-graduate outcomes are achievable for 80-90% of graduates available for placement, on the basis of as little as 40-45 "contact hours" between a typical student and his or her Job Specialist during the year, utilizing the competency guidelines. Although some students require more than twice this investment of time, flexibility in requirements for scheduled time has made the program welcome in schools that would have been loathe to accept it on more demanding terms. Efforts to strengthen the curricular component are being made.

C. Observations on Large-Scale Replication of Key Program Components

1. Basic Organization

The Job Corps has demonstrated the viability of utilizing a separate organization to manage and deliver a package of services to a target group that is of strong concern to the Congress. In the abstract, the separate structure exemplified by the JAG model is extremely attractive for a national initiative in the provision of school-to-work transition assistance. The alternative of operation by the schools is burdened by expectations that they will concentrate excessively on the classroom component, or drift in this direction. Illustratively, the only JAG state program that is dominated by the education system uniquely defers job-development activity to the summer months. This is associated with the lowest September 30 placement rate among the eight programs.

According to the present study's investigator at this site, this program is popular with teachers in participating schools and with employers

of its graduates, but awareness of its existence in the business community and among other civic leaders is surprisingly rare, in view of its scale and third-year status. Although these relative weaknesses may have other causes, historical experience warrants concern about insularity and over-emphasis on the in-school component of a transition program operated by the schools. In addition, given other performance pressures, most state education departments and school districts may not want to take on unfamiliar job development and follow-up roles. In at least one JAG state program (not the one just discussed), ex-teachers hired as Job Specialists initially balked at this part of their work, feeling that "some other specialist" should do it.

A second organizational alternative is operation in conjunction with other JTPA activities by the service delivery area's PIC-selected administrative agency. Such a program might be community-based, facilitating linkages with other social services and neighborhood employers. However, a school-based program has commanding advantages in terms of accessibility to the target group, opportunities to maximize take-up rates among targeted students, available plant and equipment, potential for linkage with compensatory education and vocational instruction, appropriateness for rural as well as urban settings, and a more neutral political milieu.

For these reasons, the present study recommends a school-based program. But such a program, if operated by a non-school agency, covering a JTPA service delivery area, faces a major administrative challenge. This is the management, from the agency's viewpoint, of a highly decentralized operation, typically characterized by one or two program personnel in dozens of high schools. The JAG program has handled this well, by means

to be considered shortly, but it requires a coherent separate organization. The policy issue is the placement of this organization in relation to the JTPA hierarchy. The PIC might establish such an organization directly, or it might instruct (or allow) its grant recipient agency to do so. A state-level organization might be created, reporting to the governor or the state job training coordinating council. Again, there are choices about the powers and functions of a state-level organization, and whether it should be mandated or optional.

The third organizational alternative is division of transition program responsibilities between the schools and the state Employment Service (or some other outside agency). Although the Congressional Budget Office does not make policy recommendations, its report on youth employment services assumed that greater federal activity in the transition-services area would utilize the Employment Service, constituting a variant on the "cooperative education" activities that at one time linked the Service to half the nation's high schools.

Although possibly representing the line of least resistance, this approach should not be embraced without considerable thought and debate. Divided responsibility for transition services is--intuitively--a weakness. As discussed in the following subsection, what this study regards as the most valuable single feature of the JAG program--the fact that the Job Specialist performs all program services--could not readily be replicated in this organizational format. In addition, costing the format is more difficult than the CBO's figure on the Employment Service demonstration project might suggest. The Service has been burdened with numerous additions to its traditional responsibilities. For example, it is responsible

for income-eligibility certification for the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, and this report's authors encountered complaints about major delays in exercise of this function.

If, as is recommended here, a follow-up emphasis similar to JAG's is regarded as mandatory for a national school-to-work transition program, this would constitute a major new activity for the Employment Service, and one it could scarcely discharge in the personalized way that is obtainable by other means and possibly important for effectiveness with the target group.

Features of the JAG program's organization that evidently matter a lot to its operatives in the schools include the high-level interest and endorsement associated with its board composition and activity, and the regional and state activities that attract publicity and broaden horizons and contacts for Job Specialists as well as students. The extent to which a national program can go in replicating these strengths is obviously dependent upon how many governors, major executives, mayors, and other prominent people are motivated to supply name and effort to this particular "cause." But it is dependent beforehand on how far the Congress is willing to go in authorizing (or mandating) an organizational format that allows or encourages this boon to program elan and employer cooperation.

The Congress might decide that a school-to-work transition services initiative should be "high-profile"--because it serves forward-looking national interests, because it is expected to work well, and because a high profile is judged to be important in job development. But there are many other claimants for similar treatment among federally funded

or subsidized programs. This is not an either/or issue, since models can be legislated that encourage rather than demand entrepreneurship in acquiring high-level support.

Organization must be considered in relation to the functions a program is expected to discharge. Conceptually and experientially, the bridge between school and work requires forms of development and maintenance that are most appropriately undertaken by a third party, an entity separate from schools and employers and other relevant community interests but with ties to all. Although formats should be workable in which some of these ties were mediated (e.g., by the PIC), there is probably some level of hierarchical subordination or PIC deficiencies where the style of operation of the school district or state education department would be preferable for a national program to work with.

The instrumental objective, after all, is to introduce an element of flow and continuity into a period of extreme discontinuity in young people's lives. It is by no means demonstrable that an operating agency embedded in the traditions of federal employment policy is better able to implement this "flow" than the schools are. Some organizations that promote school-to-work transition services (e.g., MDC, 70001) are placing emphasis on training teachers and equipping schools to assume this responsibility. This is a reasonable option in view of the schools' population coverage, the erratic history of federal youth employment services funding, the intractable requirement for school cooperation for a "flow" process, and the problems of reversion to the Employment Service "cooperative education" model.

But this is not "the best," and the great differences among and within states in school governance, politics, and receptivity should give the Congress pause as to whether it is the feasible best. All schools want credit for a good employment outcome for their students. How many want direct responsibility for securing this outcome is a different question.

2. The Job Specialist

New and demonstration programs are subject to inefficiencies that may raise costs and depress measured performance. Under more favorable circumstances, however, new and demonstration projects involve an excitement and sense of importance that may reduce costs and elevate performance. Similarly, institutionalization of what has "worked" in a demonstration project may result in experience-based improvements of performance, but it also results in the waning of the incentives of novelty. This hazard is much more serious for the providers of short-term services than for the recipients (except as its victims).

When a program is considered for large-scale replication, a key question is built-in incentives for strong performance. In the case of the JAG program, the Job Specialist occupation most unambiguously invites this characterization. This position entails a one-to-one relationship with program participants for the duration of their formal association with the program--i.e., to nine months after graduation--and sometimes beyond. Tasks are strikingly varied: assisting selection, providing classroom instruction and individual counseling, communicating with parents, maintaining positive relationships with school personnel, supervising the Career Association, cultivating employers, obtaining

job orders, assisting job application, handling follow-up, and keeping detailed records.

This is, in short, a demanding, year-round occupation with a high level of day-to-day autonomy. Yet, although one Specialist who was interviewed admitted to "crying buckets" her first few months, the program has not had serious problems in acquiring and retaining qualified men and women at salaries approximating teachers' pay. Such problems as have occurred in various sites can be satisfactorily related to specific, usually remediable causes, and they do not invalidate the statement that this is, in practice, an attractive occupation.

It is attractive, in practice, because the varied demands, the autonomy, and the emotional commitment of following students from start to finish are usually rewarded by very high rates of "positive outcome" within the timeframe of the Job Specialist's responsibility. The post-graduation follow-up requirements firm commitment to the student's best interests. They also offer an opportunity--and pressure--to turn initial failures into successes, as well as to salvage initial successes who go astray.

This dynamic is of general interest because of its "built-in" aspect, from the viewpoint of personnel motivation, and its important contribution to the instrumental goal of continuity for the program participant. We recommend that this occupation be a mandatory component of a national initiative, and that organizational alternatives that cannot be designed to meet this mandate be excluded.

However, organizational <u>support</u> is evidently essential to the Job Specialist's effectiveness. In the JAG model, several of its features

are noteworthy. First, Job Specialists do not select participants on their own but in collaboration with an advisory committee of school personnel. Properly implemented, this involvement of two organizations is a brake on any temptation the Job Specialist may have to "cream" the applicant pool. (This hazard is discussed in more detail in Section IV-A.)

Second, the organization defines the Specialist's job-development territory and operates the Job Bank system that registers and disburses job orders. Both functions involve fairness issues for the Job Specialist and are prominent among start-up problems for new programs. But they appear to have been satisfactorily resolved by established programs.

Third, adequacy of supervision is essential to maintain both discipline and morale in a highly decentralized system. JAG's experience suggests that a ratio of one supervisor to 10-12 Job Specialists 's adequate to support the necessary level of interaction, from both the Specialist's and the organization's point of view. This appears to be a valid rule of thumb in the two state programs for which the study sought evidence.

Fourth, such program devices as the regional and state activities of the Career Association and the emphasis on a prestigious board aid in establishing the Job Specialists' sense of affiliation with something bigger and less mundane than the activities of a particular school. To the extent that school-to-work transition programs maintain this sense, it helps to replace the stimulus to effort associated with experimental status.

Fifth, as an aspect of supervision, the use of performance criteria (and the record-keeping to provide them) has enduring importance. The generic question of which criteria should be used is considered in Section IV-B.

3. The Career Association

The "career association" component links JAG (and 70001) to the transition-services tradition represented by the vocational student organizations, while differentiating these programs from others, such as MDC's Job Readiness Training Program, that rely entirely on scheduled class time to achieve the same objectives. Organized as an extracurricular activity, JAG's Career Association reinforces the instructional and motivational activities of the classroom. In this study's limited inquiries, the Association appeared to be least popular with Job Specialists in a state program where generous scheduled class time is routinely provided. Elsewhere, opinions ranged from "clearly valuable" to "indispensable," with experienced Job Specialists more emphatic than new ones who are struggling to gain mastery of a variety of occupational tasks.

The use of extracurricular organizations as a school-to-work transition tool is old and widespread, but it has never been subjected to statistical evaluation. Its most obvious value lies in the extent to which students can be induced to learn skills and attitudes promoting job-readiness, independent living, and good citizenship on their own time rather than the schools'. This is a quite important asset in securing acceptance by the schools, and it gains in importance to the extent that the hours the schools do not give up to job-readiness training are used to remediate basic academic deficiencies or to teach valuable vocational skills.

However, the values most commonly mentioned in our JAG Job Specialist interviews pertain to the added dimension of the student's personality and the Specialist-student relationship that is opened by the extracurricular

setting; and to the role of Career Association activities in acculturation and motivation of students who have no prior experience of organizational membership and leadership. This aspect clearly transcends the "mickey mouse" caricature of Roberts Rules of Order and initiation-ceremony rituals that brief exposure to Career Association activities invites. Job Specialists see the narrow horizons of urban ghetto youth and their rural counterparts being broadened to include civic and social identities and habits that can pave the way to middle-class status. One would have to be seriously alienated to challenge the ideal of the American mainstream that the Career Association combines with games and contests that reinforce instruction aimed at improving job-search and job-holding savvy. Likewise, the problem-solving aspect--how to raise the money to support the activities--has educational value.

Nevertheless, many of these gains can be imparted to the classroom's "captive population" or through group and individual counseling during the interstices of the school day. Job Specialists estimate that only 50-60 percent of their students are active participants in the Career Association.

The conclusion drawn here is that this type of transition aid resembles work-experience. It can be counterproductive. It lacks documentation of effectiveness in improving labor market value. It has intuitive appeal, albeit of a different kind: I.e., the analyst wants transition programs to do more than improve the participants' chances for immediate post-graduate employment, and it is persuasive that the Career Association does this for some students, just as it is persuasive that work experience

crystallizes a career path or an understanding of the world of work for some.

Additionally, the Career Association--like work-experience and vocational training--may hold some students within the schools (and the transition program) who are otherwise dropouts, and more difficult to assist. And work experience, like the Career Association, can be an after-school activity, although it has frequently been organized to occupy much of the school day.

The recommendation of this study is that a school-to-work transition program should have a school-year component that operates outside of school hours--in part because this conforms to the time-allocation realities of the world of work, in part as "adding a dimension" to what can be provided in the classroom, and in part as fortifying participant motivation. Work experience programs that command a significant fraction of the school day or require stipends should be evaluated separately, as to federal funding of this activity. However, their students, like voc-ed students, should have equal access to transition programs, utilizing schedules that are sensitive to other educational needs.

The Career Association, in sum, cannot be justified on available evidence as a mandatory part of a national school-to-work transition program. It is attractive as an aid to socialization. It is more clearly attractive for increasing flexibility in relation to schools that are jealous of their time. However, it has not been documented that this is a cost-free trade-off. There has been no program, hence no net-gain evaluation, that combines generous classroom instruction with adequate emphasis on placement and follow-up <u>without</u> adjunct activities--club-

type or work-experience. In addition to the recommendation made above, this variant deserves experimental application.

D. Benchmark Data from the JAG Program

1. Costs

Table 7 provides three measures of per capita cost for the JAG program in 1982-83. Cost per participant represents the entire senior-class roster. The figure would of course be lower if one included graduates, who receive scheduled (and unscheduled) services for nine months of the year. Cost per job placement represents all 1983 graduates, available for placement, who were registered as employed at the end of September 1983, including those in military service. These are part-time as well as full-time workers. Graduates holding jobs while attending school are classified as employed. The third column indicates costs per "positive placement," defined in the Department of Labor manner to cover all employment and schooling.

The overall cost per job placement is $1,750, and $1,650 for the five older state programs. Per positive placement these costs are $1,350 and $1,300 respectively. Per participant--the most important figure for prospective cost-accounting--they are $900 and $850. The size of the cost difference between "participants" and "positive placements" is largely attributable to attrition--persons who failed to graduate, left the area, or are otherwise not available for placement. Pregnancy is a common reason for attrition. The program's overall positive-placement rate for persons available for placement in the Class of '83 is 84 percent.*

*Performance measures are discussed in later sections.

Table 7

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR THE JAG PROGRAM, PER CAPITA, 1982-83
(ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST $50)

	COSTS PER PARTICIPANT	COSTS PER JOB PLACEMENT	COSTS PER POSITIVE OUTCOME
ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS	$ 850	$1,650	$1,300
ARIZONA	$ 750	$1,750	$1,300
BAY STATE	1,000	1,550	1,500
DELAWARE	1,200	2,000	1,650
MISSOURI	700	1,500	1,050
TENNESSEE	850	1,500	1,200
NEW PROGRAMS	$1,150	$2,350	$1,900
CINCINNATI	$ 850	$1,600	$1,350
MICHIGAN*	1,400	2,750	2,250
VIRGINIA	1,250	2,800	2,200
TOTAL PROGRAM	$ 900	$1,750	$1,350

*BASED ON 15-MONTH EXPENDITURES. A PRO-RATED ESTIMATE FOR A YEAR IS $1,108/PARTICIPANT, $2,216/PLACEMENT, AND $1,791/POSITIVE OUTCOME.

NOTE: FOR EXPLANATION OF TERMS, SEE TEXT.

Variation among the sites is partially attributable to differing fiscal years and other artifactual influences. Of general interest is the association of the highest per job placement costs among the established programs with sites that are more heterogeneous in coverage of types of high schools. Delaware covers all but one of the state's public high schools; Arizona covers all high schools with a specified minimum senior class size. Heterogeneity can raise per capita costs because some schools may have too few students to fully support a Job Specialist and/or a high proportion deciding to go to college.

JAG's experience indicates the level of expenditures at which programs of this type can be operated in various parts of the country, and for various school configurations, at the present time. Routes to further economies for these programs are hard to identify. The uncertain and piecemeal character of financial support has produced vigorous attention to cost control. The record is low cost in comparison with many types of youth employment assistance, but it is of course high cost if viewed as an adjunct to per-student spending by the schools, which averaged less than $2,500 in the 1982-83 school year. It is not to be expected that many school systems or state education departments are in a position to use their own revenues to provide a $900 service to twenty percent of the senior class.

However, the Table 7 data at least tenuously imply that costs might be further reduced, in a hypothetical nationally-funded program, by excluding certain types of schools or admitting them only on a cost-sharing basis. A simple formula for making this distinction might include the size of the senior class and the proportion who go on to college (quite

low in many rural schools). For a JAG-type program, an enforced, fairly high minimum ratio of students to Job Specialists is another cost-control possibility but administratively problematic.

2. Participation

A per capita cost benchmark can be translated into a national estimate only if a participation-rate benchmark is also available. Table 8 documents the JAG program's participation rates for the schools in which it operates. Bearing in mind that the form of available data varied among state programs, the overall coverage is 15 percent of the senior class (averaged for four programs) and 13 percent of graduating seniors (averaged for six). However, deviation from average is considerable, and deviation among schools within a state program is also substantial, as would be expected. Exceptionally high rates are registered where the program is wholly "inner city"--Missouri (St. Louis and Kansas City) and Cincinnati. The lowest participation rates occur where school coverage is most extensive and heterogeneous: Arizona and Delaware.

However, other variables are involved. Most sites (Cincinnati an exception) do not include voc-ed students, and some have significant competition of other kinds, such as work-study programs.* The participation-rate averages, in short, cloak questions of under-coverage as

*The term "work-study" is used loosely in this report to denote a wide range of programs that assist students to obtain work experience during the school year, either as a part of the regular curriculum or separately. Only a small fraction of these programs is covered by the federal definitions of work-study: "a program designed to contribute financial means, to students in need, through part-time employment;" and Cooperative Education: "an instructural plan that combines study at school (most often in the vocational track) with regularly supervised employment." (National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, 1981, p. 258.)

Table 8

JAG ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENT OF SENIOR CLASS AND/OR JAG GRADUATES AS A PERCENT OF GRADUATING SENIORS, 1982-83

	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	JAG ENROLLMENT AS A % OF SENIOR CLASS	JAG GRADUATES AS A % OF GRADUATING SENIORS
ARIZONA	35	10%	9%
BAY STATE	8	18	18
CINCINNATI*	3	--	23
DELAWARE	25	--	13
MICHIGAN*	8	11	--
MISSOURI	20	27	--
TENNESSEE	34	--	17
VIRGINIA*	6	--	17
TOTAL FOR REPORTING JURISDICTIONS		15%	13%

*FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM.

NOTE: PERCENTAGES ARE BASED ON PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS.

well as over-coverage. There are schools where the program, from a cost-benefit standpoint, is at best marginally viable in terms of the numbers of students needing the package of services it offers to improve their negotiation of the school-to-work transition. But there are also instances where budgetary constraints deprive a school of the second or third Job Specialist it could well employ, and instances where "turf" arrangements require students to make choices (or to have no choice) between programs that properly should not require a choice. Considering such constraints, JAG's 15 percent participation rate is certainly compatible with an estimate that the "bottom" 20 percent of the senior class nationally would benefit from this type of program at the present time.

However, a question that bears raising is motivation to participate. In theory, an ancillary benefit of transition services such as JAG provides is dropout prevention. The unemployment rate for 1981-82's 668,000 high school dropouts in October 1982 was 42 percent. In addition, 23 percent of male dropouts (as well as 52 percent of females) were not in the labor force at all. Many work-experience programs are targeted on the potential dropout who is restless with the classroom environment. Evidently, vocational curricula aiso attract many of these students. Logic says that it is desirable to fuse the strengths of these programs to the employability-skills training, acculturation activities, placement, and follow-up services of the transition assistance model represented by JAG.

It is surprising and scarcely credible to find a statistical indication that 30 percent of high school seniors in the spring of 1980 were participating in three categories of government-sponsored work-experience

programs which aimed primarily to target the disadvantaged.* Even if significant numbers of students were beneficiaries of more than one of these programs, this subgroup of persons needing transition assistance in itself exceeds the 20 percent overall estimate used here; it also exceeds this estimate if the type of program most closely affiliated with the vocational curriculum (Cooperative Education) is excluded.

It is not known how many of these seniors had access to the types of services treated in this report, or how many were appropriate candidates for a full package of transition services. In practice, access to the "package" poses serious problems of excessive demand on the senior's time for programs in which an outside-work component absorbs some school-hours. It remains that a two-year program (such as JAG was initially designed to be) could certainly be designed with sequences or choices of work-experience and club activities on a non-scheduled-time basis, as well as some classroom instruction. And it may be that a one-year design could be fitted to most needy students' schedule without detriment.

3. Cost-effectiveness

School-to-work transition programs share the character of most preventative measures: Rarely can the population at risk be precisely defined. However, a program that costs $900 per participant has to apply more stringent criteria than a program administering tetanus shots. Those subgroups of the senior class that represent the lowest post-graduate

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*M.F. Owings and N.B. Dearman, "Educational Status of the Labor Force; Transition from Education to Work; Youth Unemployment," in National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, 1981, p. 258. The categories were Cooperative Education and Work-Study (as defined in the preceding footnote), and CETA.

employment-to-population ratio and the highest unemployment rates for persons not in college are necessarily the first objective of a program that would cost more than half a billion dollars to cover 20 percent of today's senior class. (However, it should be remembered that available statistical measures identify only some of these high-risk subgroups.)

If the goal is accepted as important, it is necessary to have evidence that persons experiencing a "treatment" do better on relevant measures than similar persons who do not. Table 9 provides benchmark data from JAG's fall 1982 evaluation indicating a statistically significant advantage on all three measures, at the .01 level, in all but one comparison (Tennessee positive placement) for the four state programs for which the evaluation could be made.* Table 10 demonstrates for the combined programs that the advantage in positive placements over the sample of nonparticipants is proportionally greater for nonwhites than for whites, for persons with lower grade averages over higher, for persons with no substantial prior employment experience over those with this experience (the latter not shown), and especially for participants from families with welfare income.

Although the advantage over the comparison group is least for "positive placement" among the three measures shown, this measure lacks the ambiguities of interpretation characteristic of the others. For example, it is impressive that the program's nonwhites are twice as likely to be employed as those in the comparison group (who were not in the same

*Employment, in this evaluation, did not include military service. About 5 percent of program graduates available for placement were in military service on September 30, 1982, and about 7 percent on March 30, 1983.

Table 9

PLACEMENT STATUS OF JAG PARTICIPANTS AND COMPARISON GROUP AT TIME OF FALL FOLLOW-UP, 1982

	ADJUSTED MEAN FOR PARTICIPANTS	ADJUSTED MEAN FOR COMPARISON GROUP
MASSACHUSETTS (N=341)		
% EMPLOYED	76%	62%
% UNEMPLOYED	6	23
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	91	76
DELAWARE (N=1249)		
% EMPLOYED	55%	36%
% UNEMPLOYED	15	43
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	82	65
MISSOURI (N=446)		
% EMPLOYED	48%	33%
% UNEMPLOYED	21	36
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	79	64
TENNESSEE (N=609)		
% EMPLOYED	55%	27%
% UNEMPLOYED	23	60
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	71	63

NOTE: "EMPLOYED" CATEGORY EXCLUDES MILITARY SERVICE. "UNEMPLOYED" REFERS TO PERSONS LOOKING FOR A JOB IN THE PREVIOUS WEEK. SUCH PERSONS MAY BE IN SCHOOL OR A TRAINING PROGRAM, HENCE CLASSIFIED ALSO AS "POSITIVE OUTCOME."

Table 10

PLACEMENT STATUS FOR JAG PARTICIPANTS AND COMPARISON GROUPS AT TIME OF FALL FOLLOW-UP, BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS, 1982

	ADJUSTED MEAN FOR PARTICIPANTS	ADJUSTED MEAN FOR COMPARISON GROUP
WHITES		
% EMPLOYED	78%	61%
% UNEMPLOYED	6	18
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	89	79
NONWHITES		
% EMPLOYED	45%	22%
% UNEMPLOYED	23	53
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	75	64
GRADE AVERAGE OF B OR ABOVE		
% EMPLOYED	58%	41%
% UNEMPLOYED	11	36
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	89	79
GRADE AVERAGE OF C OR BELOW		
% EMPLOYED	52%	27%
% UNEMPLOYED	22	47
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	73	61
FAMILIES WITH WELFARE INCOME		
% EMPLOYED	44%	26%
% UNEMPLOYED	23	65
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	72	54
NO SUBSTANTIAL PRIOR EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE		
% EMPLOYED	45%	16%
% UNEMPLOYED	22	55
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	74	60
MALES		
% EMPLOYED	59%	38%
% UNEMPLOYED	16	39
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	82	71
FEMALES		
% EMPLOYED	50%	29%
% UNEMPLOYED	16	47
% POSITIVE PLACEMENTS	77	65

SEE FOOTNOTE, TABLE 9.

schools) but it is possible that unmeasured pre-program motivational differences impede the comparison. Alsc, it might be suspected that some of the "advantage" results from the program's strong emphasis on placement and continuing employment, as opposed to encouraging further education. These reservations are somewhat allayed when it is seen that the advantage in total "positive placement" ranges from 17 to 33 percent for the population subgroups that would be regarded as especially at risk of post-graduate difficulties.

As with per capita costs, these data are an experience-based standard that is available to assist in planning a hypothetical national school-to-work transition program with similar characteristics.

V. KEY ISSUES FOR PROGRAM DESIGN

A. Targeting the Disadvantaged

Given continuity of funding--contingent on meeting performance norms--it is not difficult to imagine a school-to-work transition program earning this funding so long as the objective was considered important. One hazard that arises in this type of scenario is, however, a bureaucratic drift toward "creaming," in which the persons responsible for setting the roster and discouraging dropouts would gradually raise their subjective criteria for suitability.

It is useful to think of this possible dynamic as having two separable components. The first is downward exclusion, the second upward inclusion. Either might occur as a calculated effort to ease the meeting of placement and other outcome standards, but more reputable and less conscious motives are likely to be more pervasive. Using the JAG program for hypothetical illustration, exclusion of the most difficult students would be very tempting in instances where Job Specialists' caseload is near the top of the approved 35-50 range. The Specialist, who for much of the year is also following last year's graduates, is likely to resent the time spent on "lost causes" and disciplinary problems as subtracting from attention to students with a more hopeful prognosis who nevertheless need substantial help.

Conversely, inclusion of students who may not need the services can be associated with a too-small pool of appropriate students to support even the minimum approved caseload for the Specialist or Specialists assigned to the school. However, this is an unambiguous concern mainly in the context of cost-control. From the viewpoint of the school personnel

who aid in determining the program roster, a socially inept, aimless, mediocre student from a white, middle-income family will seem an appropriate candidate, given available space. That is, in the past eighteen years, the schools have become accustomed to federally funded programs targeting defined disadvantaged groups, but many educators remain hostile or uncomfortable with this departure from a traditional focus on individual needs. Likewise, the advantages of a socioeconomic and racial mix for educational effectiveness and social goals are urged by many, with arguments that are perhaps strongest where students who meet stringent program criteria are few in number, and perhaps especially where they are bused into a suburban or other middle-class school.

These are attractive contentions, yet they do not do away with the cost-control problem. As suggested earlier, a formulistic means for excluding some high schools or requiring them to cost-share may need consideration for a national initiative. In addition, budgetary limits are themselves a brake on "upward inclusion," unless it is accompanied by "downward exclusion."

A flat taboo on downward exclusion would be inappropriate for the many high schools where some seniors have too serious academic or behavioral problems for a program of this nature to handle. In terms of guidelines, the JAG state programs are themselves inconsistent: for example, some exclude students reading below the sixth-grade level while others do not.* A diagnostic pre-test might be used in connection with longitudinal follow-up to test subjective judgment of certain barriers

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*It is an indication of differences in target group that the average Job Corps participant reads at a sixth-grade level.

to employability, but other aspects can be known only on the basis of teacher impressions and the like. Nevertheless, it might be possible in a mature program to vary caseloads equitably on the basis of the assessed difficulty of participant mix.

It certainly is feasible to identify those program personnel who have a good record with seriously disadvantaged students, and to find out what replicable techniques they employ. In-service training can emphasize such techniques. Insofar as sound pre-diagnosis of degree of difficulty can be established, incentives for accepting and rewards for placing the most difficult are a possibility, albeit depending on further research. In the interim, incentives could be related to standard available criteria for severe socioeconomic and academic disadvantage.

The point to emphasize is that this type of program is designed for students with multiple handicaps in relation to employability. JAG's data suggest that this type of approach is significantly cost-effective with such individuals, but its aggregate costs are sizable. Mechanisms to focus spending where the need is known to be greatest are important, but the JTPA family-income criterion is too restrictive.

B. Adjusting Placement Practice to the Economic Cycle

A second major concern that arises for the future is that too much emphasis may be placed on "quantity" of placement and not enough on "quality." JAG's achievement of high job placements is impressive in the context of staggeringly high unemployment rates for comparable individuals. In October 1982, black recent high school graduates who were not in school or the military had an employment rate of only 29 percent. For the roughly

comparable graduate population in JAG's heavily black Memphis program, the ratio of employed to total was 71 percent at roughly the same time. In the fall of 1983, a greatly enlarged Memphis graduate group in this category (from 450 to 1000) had a 74 percent employment rate. (These are conservative estimates, since the base includes individuals who had left the area.)

However, two-fifths of these placements were in part-time jobs (a category including persons also attending school), and a review of files in Memphis suggests that a high proportion of all jobs were in restaurants and retail stores. These jobs were varied--from janitor and stockboy to cook and cashier. Useful skills were being acquired, and tasks were often varied, as is common in small enterprises. But most jobs were at or near minimum-wage in this sample, and opportunities for promotion to a job paying a "living wage" are not strong in these parts of the service sector.

The idea that program graduates are locked into dead-end jobs is most certainly not valid. Graduates have a measured advantage in wages and occupational distribution, and the basic goal of the nine-month follow-up is to maintain and strengthen that edge by intelligent job changes as well as satisfactory performance on the job and qualification for employers' OJT and management-training programs. By any realistic measure, qualitative accomplishments have been satisfactory. The point is rather that programs of this type should take advantage of cyclical improvements in the economy to upgrade initial placement quality, not merely to maintain or raise placement rates. As is evident from the lower section of Table 11, unemployment rates for nonwhite males at the ages of these recent graduates have shown a disturbing secular rise, but they have also shown very considerable

Table 11

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIOS FOR BLACK HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO WERE NOT IN COLLEGE OR MILITARY SERVICE, IN OCTOBER OF THE YEAR OF GRADUATION, 1978-1982

	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIO
1978	40%	46%
1979	39	44
1980	52	35
1981	54	32
1982	58	29

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF NONWHITE MALES, AGES 18-19, NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, CYCLICAL EXTREMES, 1969-1981

1969	15%
1971	24
1973	19
1976	43
1978-79	27
1981	47

cyclical variation. For placement, one obvious opportunity that emerges on the upswing is factory employment, as the pool of laid-off workers is drawn down and as unions become interested in new recruits.

JAG may be used hypothetically to illustrate potential obstacles to developing this flexibility. First, adjustment requires the Job Specialist to make new kinds of employer contacts and union contacts, extending exploration to environments that are less familiar to most Specialists than fast-food restaurants, stores, and banks. Second, the everyday business constituency for this type of program is the small employer, whose interests it well serves. This is the individual who has no personnel department and (in our interviews) complains about being plagued by non-serious applicants who are only interested in meeting job-search requirements for their unemployment-insurance payments. The combination of dwindling high school enrollment and cyclical unemployment decline suggests that this constituency for transition programs should be less well served in the next few years: i.e., it is not in the public interest to protect businesses that have benefited from a glut of young workers in the past two decades. Yet Job Specialists who are attentive to keeping their fences mended will be powerfully tempted to stick with these established customers, and they may be pleased to find that high placement rates are easier to achieve than in the past--without "creaming."

It should be clear that this is a hypothetical problem. Placing graduates was not easy in 1983. Nevertheless, it is such a plausible problem as to demand immediate attention and careful definition. Demographic projections indicate that future change in youth-labor demand-supply conditions should have an enduring as well as a cyclical character.

On the other hand, structural changes in the economy are expected to lessen the importance of traditional blue-collar work; some might argue that students should not be encouraged to take jobs that may offer relatively high pay and good fringe and training benefits in the short-term but are likely to evaporate later. However, the employability and trainability of unskilled and semi-skilled youth is itself a factor in this outlook and in manufacturers' locational choices. There is a chicken-and-egg problem here that is most sensibly addressed by emphasizing the job-ready youth's short-term opportunities for higher wages or apprenticeship and other training in the manufacturing sector, as in others.

More difficult to address is the expected future cyclicality of these opportunities, and the differing industrial composition among labor-market areas. The challenge for a national system is to induce flexible response to differing opportunities without excessive elaboration of performance standards. The JAG program's history illustrates that high rates of placement can be realized consistently under extremely adverse job-market conditions, in a variety of settings. As emphasized above, the accountability procedures and incentives that contribute to this benchmark achievement need augmentation to protect against a large-scale program's plausible drift toward including inappropriate students and/or excluding appropriate ones. However, it may be equally important to reinforce incentives for quality of placement.

This incentive problem is not simple for a large system to solve. Wage, per se, is a very shaky indicator of "quality" of placement, since apprenticeship and other on-the-job training opportunities may be associated with low wages initially and for longer than follow-up is practicable

as a routine part of the program. The use of industrial-occupational classifications is subject to excessive variability and complexity for performance records. The linking of placement standards to available local unemployment rates lacks a lucid relationship to quality (and quantity) of placement; however, such linkage may have some utility in applying top-down pressures, through the system's layers, for quality improvements.

The limitations of mechanistic safeguards are apparent in all human-services systems. This report has emphasized the inherent incentive-strengths of JAG's "Job Specialist" occupation in part because these connote cordiality to quality objectives. It is, again, back-up that is the key. The national-state-regional chain of accountability under JTPA constitutes a manageable arena for keying quality priority to trends in local labor market conditions. It is specifically at the regional level (e.g., metropolitan or rural SDA) that economic improvements identified "further up" can be translated into identification of new placement opportunities and passed down to the local operatives for further refinement, together with indoctrinational reinforcement and advice.

For the JAG program itself, it is credible that priority for cyclical improvement of placement quality could mesh well, at present, with incentives to avoid "creaming." If a healthier economy permits the more seriously disadvantaged seniors to be brought up to an acceptable employability level, Job Specialists will be able to develop more high-quality employer contacts without leaving established contacts in the lurch. However, the next economic downturn will create reverse adjustment problems. A system intended for extended usefulness must be designed to handle both.

C. Hazards of Over-Design

The federal government can shed administrative responsibility for federally-funded or cost-shared programs by employing revenue-sharing and block-grant mechanisms that assign this responsibility to the states or other intermediaries. At the opposite extreme, procedural detail can be minutely specified. This approach aims to secure conformity to legislative intent.

Sections IV-A and IV-B of this report have emphasized implementation objectives that call for attention in system-design rules: cost-effectiveness in targeting students and in responding to labor-market variation. In both instances, a necessary performance criterion for placement can prove counterproductive if other aspects of performance are scanted.

However, the desire to accomplish everything by specification is also a hazard. Because this study has focused on the JAG model, an obvious illustration is the variability of this program's classroom component, and the subjective standards employed by its Job Specialists in certifying acquisition and demonstration of the 33 "competencies" considered important for employability. Although JAG is at present experimentally introducing performance tests for some aspects of its instructional efforts, there is nothing in the evaluation literature to cast light on the question of whether a standardized curriculum and/or this type of testing adds to or subtracts from the effectiveness of a program that otherwise resembles JAG.

This dearth of experience also applies to the modified JAG model that this study regards as feasible for large-scale replication within the JTPA structure: a separate organization (many definitions possible) that is not exclusively identified with one "side" or party to the transition

process; strong emphasis on job placement and extended follow-up; safeguard of continuity and the student's best interests by use of a trained professional who implements the full process on a one-to-one basis with the student; location in the schools; backup (job bank, adequate supervision); and the option (in practice, what JAG offers) of participation in an extracurricular student association--combinable, resources permitting, with a work-experience option or sequence.

The gap in these specifications is the curricular component. To add specifications of substantial classroom (as opposed to "contact") time may be desirable, but it also introduces an obstacle to welcome by many schools. To add standardized testing of cognitive and attitudinal gains from instruction may be desirable, but it also introduces an incentive for the instructor to "teach for the tests" and to scant time for job-development and follow-up. Because the target group are poor test-takers, the addition of this performance measure may also be demoralizing to an instructor who is accustomed to strong positive results from placement and follow-up efforts and it provides another incentive to "cream" the applicant pool.

These potential negatives point to a real dilemma. However, there are ways around this problem. First, participation in a national transition-services program can be made contingent on participants' access, as needed, to remedial instruction in basic academic skills. Under prevailing and prospective conditions, this requirement need not carry JTPA financial support, although marginal remediative assistance can occur within the program.

Second, instructors can be required to use job-readiness materials that have been tested for efficacy in securing cognitive and attitudinal gains. There is a rich and growing supply of such materials. Third, cognitive and attitudinal gains can be monitored as research. To avoid hazards noted earlier, this requires security measures: instructors should not see the tests, and they should not be evaluated on the basis of test findings (which, therefore, should not be presented to their supervisors). The intent of research should be exclusively to link follow-up employment and "positive placement" gains to what is not now known: the specific materials and techniques for instruction, the allocation of time among subject areas, and the total time accorded to instruction. This approach is a responsible way to avoid over-design without pending action on further research.

A second hazard of "over-design" pertains to the most evident weakness of the transition programs operative today and in the past: their lack of integration with one another and with related programs inside and outside the schools. These problems pertain to the young person's longitudinal experience of discontinuities, omissions, and unplanned redundancies, and to compartmentalizations that impede the pooling of strengths and the sharing of information or knowledge. Such deficiencies are the legacy of an era of experimentation that is in danger of being perpetuated beyond its useful term as a central focus of youth policy.

The federal government can and should use its influence to secure a more rational integration of longitudinally and laterally related instruction and services to promote employability and advancement. However organized, school-to-work transition programs may otherwise tend to evolve

along lines of least resistance, serving the uncontested fraction of the needy population, and serving even that fraction without adequate referral capability.

Yet the hazard of over-design arises in mandating linkages almost as seriously as in trying to avert the need for them. The clear initial priority is to eliminate arbitrary barriers to accessibility by the target group. The program's in-school component should be designed to assure that all students judged to need the full package of transitional services have the opportunity to obtain it, without detriment to their other curricular needs. In the JAG manner, this requires flexible arrangements for the use of scheduled and nonscheduled time.

But the concept of accessibility has more general aspects. As previously noted, provision for choice or sequencing of "club" and work-experience activities may also be serviceable for enlarging access. The program's valuable placement and follow-up assistance should have prerequisites in relevant knowledge and skill development, but program design must progressively emphasize the related variables of opportunity and motivation to acquire these prerequisites. It must progressively become more sensitive to personal and family problems that can derail the transition process, with long-term effects.

Minimal legislated access requirements are not sufficient for integration of transition services with other counseling and remedial activities of the schools, but they provide a base for such refinements. In addition, they probably define the adjustment burden that schools or school districts can realistically be expected to carry at the start, even if the schools are not simultaneously occupied with organizing the program.

D. Breaking with the Past

It is this report's contention that school-to-work transition techniques are being employed effectively enough, on a large enough scale, to be considered ready for national replication, if their objectives are regarded as serving important national goals. The specific program-design issues discussed in earlier parts of this section are selected from a much larger number that prior experience identifies as salient to implementation. However, underlying all such issues is a federal modus operandi that has reflected inadequacies of knowledge and also the inability of a Congress or Administration to commit its successors. This problem is mentioned and illustrated again and again, for example, in the voluminous reports on implementation of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977. It is characterized by the exacerbation of design and start-up problems by excessive haste. What follows may be excerpted from one of many reports that deplore it:*

> Uncertainty about funding levels, regulations, and the law itself is a distinguishing characteristic of the entire CETA federal/prime sponsor partnership. Habitual as such uncertainties are, and continue to be under YEDPA, they still exact an enormous toll...Changing signals regarding funding levels caused sponsors to accelerate enrollments and then back-off. Some were forced to lay off enrollees and staff...These factors have reduced the planning and development time for new programs, and hurt the credibility of sponsors with other local agencies. They have also created a difficult work climate.

Desire to correct what the quoted report calls "the crisis climate" influenced JTPA's design, but this climate could be encouraged by linking new priorities for youth policy to a demographic trend reversal of substantial

*National Council on Employment Policy, Youth and the Local Employment Agenda (Youth Knowledge Development Report 3.16), U.S. Department of Labor, May 1980.

magnitude that is already underway. Yet this is the wrong way to proceed. Program design and implementation strategy must embody a credible intent of durability. This is indisputably difficult--indeed, an invitation to interminable delays of enactment. Simplicity of basic specifications, restraint and realism in designing performance measures, sensitivity to the place of options, realistic phase-in schedule: These are keys to establishing transition services as part of an enduring apparatus for improving human capital development and utilization.

VI. POSTSCRIPT

Readers of this report will have varying familiarity with scholarly controversies over the need for school-to-work transition services. Because these controversies evolved in conditions of a glut of young workers, their usefulness as input for current policy decisions requires sensitivity to changes associated with demographic trend reversal. However, the economists' distinction between frictional and extended unemployment retains usefulness. In 1977, during a period of recovery for the economy roughly comparable to present expectations for the near-term future, Robert Lerman estimates that 70-80% of the weeks of unemployment were borne by young workers with 15 weeks or more of joblessness. Among black males, ages 16-24, Lerner states that those who were unable to find any job at all during the year accounted for one-third of total weeks of unemployment.*

Bearing in mind that this "hard core" excludes young people who dropped out of the legal labor force entirely, owing to discouragement or illegal options for earning money, there is a basic problem here that cyclical economic improvements and demographic trends will diminish to some extent. However, amelioration by these means is limited by employers' tendency to leave or avoid urban (and rural) areas where this hard core of poor employment prospects is concentrated. In turn, these locational decisions impede job opportunities for marginally qualified individuals who are at risk of becoming "hard core."

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*Robert Lerman, "An Analysis of Youth Employment Problems," in the Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment report, A Review of Youth Employment Problems, Programs and Policies, Volume I, January 1980.

Under conditions of young-worker surplus, this was as much or more a social or socioeconomic problem as a pure economic problem. In this circumstance, much emphasis was placed upon the rights of young people to equal or compensatory employment opportunities, and upon the plight of older cities where the hard core was conspicuously concentrated. These pleas have merit, but they are not an adequate basis for national policies that must balance the interests of minorities (persons and places) with the general welfare. However, the input to this complex equation changes when the numeric and compositional characteristics of the young-worker population change. The outlook today, based on persons already born, is a dramatic reversal of the numeric trend, combined with persistence of the prior compositional trend.

This reduces the necessity for proponents of federal activism to lean on arguments of young people's "rights" and shaky appeals to prop up aging urban or rural labor markets. There is now a clear-cut national need to compensate for demographic trends that impoverish employers' choices. This is not an unqualified need--productivity gains can and should be realized in services that have benefited from a glut of teens, and gains in employment for the elderly and handicapped can also be realized as the teenage labor pool dwindles. But it is a real need, and the policy objective of reducing recruits to the ranks of the unemployable and marginally employable gains in importance the further one looks ahead.

The long-term need is ability to substitute quality for quantity in meeting the challenges of an increasingly competitive world economy and in supporting the greatly-enlarged elderly proportion of the population that is predictable for the next century. This dictates strong present

emphasis on strengthening the educational process in both its cognitive and acculturating aspects. But there is also a need to minimize dislocations associated with the ten-year outlook of an unprecedented rate of decline in the numbers of young people reaching labor-force age, combined with continuing compositional changes that augur poorly for these young people's average value to employers.

The national importance of this short-term need cannot be reliably described in advance, since many variables are involved and the process has hopeful as well as hazardous aspects. Yet the hazards are important, and they influence interpretation of the fact that most youth unemployment is "frictional," part of a rather extended process in which young people reach the adult status of stable employment. The idea that there is a national interest in making this transitional process more efficient carries greater weight when the total youthful labor supply is dwindling.

In this circumstance--now operative--the argument for transition services becomes much broader. It becomes less important that existing diagnostic measures cannot capture those at serious risk of becoming "hard core" unemployed without also including more who would probably make a successful adaptation eventually. It becomes more important that even crude diagnostic techniques can identify students who will have some adaptation problems that short-term assistance can remediate.

Additionally, it becomes more important to bring students and potential employers into contact in a frame of reference that assuages the employer's doubts, especially about minority youth. This gain can also be realized by similar programs working with drop-outs or welfare recipients. There is no intention here to argue that employability assistance

to high school seniors should substitute for other short-term interventions, but simply to say that the target group within the high-school senior class is large (about 650,000 students at present) and relatively easy to reach by proven methods.

Obviously, replication of these methods cannot be guaranteed to yield comparable results on a national scale. On the other hand, the coverage that is necessary to produce a strong impact will come about at a snail's pace in the absence of a timely national initiative. At present, school-to-work transition programs have uncertain and diminished federal funding, requiring diversion of energies from operational to survival needs, and creating a justifiable reluctance to expand, even if start-up funding can be obtained. Some fine programs have fallen by the wayside.

Although this same lot has befallen other types of service programs, youth employment policy has since 1980 reflected an exceptional disregard for knowledge that was developed at great expense. The legacy of YEDPA should not be regarded as one more set of claimants for scarce dollars, but as a basis for rational investment in the future of the nation's youth.

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